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THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS
OF THE
CALIFORNIA MISSIONS

ROBERT ARCHIBALD

ACADEMY OF AMERICAN FRANCISCAN HISTORY

WASHINGTON, D.C.

1978

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BY THE WILLIAM BYRD PRESS, INC.
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS
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Introduction

The three leading institutions of the northern frontier of New Spain, presidio, pueblo and mission, were active agents which planted Hispanic culture indelibly upon California. Though partners on the frontier, each served a distinct function. The presidio represented the military and secular authority essential for the success of the other two. It was integral to the grand design of the mad genius of José de Gálvez to block Russian southward encroachment. Spain, rejuvenated under Charles III, was engaging in what has been called "aggressive defensive expansion." Although frequently clothed in terms of a pious mission to the natives of Alta California, the motivation for the "Sacred Expedition" to colonize the area has more to do with the international strategy of the Spanish Bourbons. The pueblo and mission were intended to secure Spain's hold upon New California.

The pueblos, Los Angeles, San José, and for a time, Branciforte, in addition to civilian settlements which gradually grew up around presidios and missions, were intended to supplement the military with agricultural products. This, it was hoped, would relieve Spain of maintaining the expensive and uncertain supply line linking California with the Port of San Blas. Although the pueblos gradually matured into centers of Spanish civilization, they never fulfilled expectations. Frontier California offered little to Mexican civilians of the better sort and not enough was done to attract them. Furthermore, civilians could not compete with the cheap labor provided by Indian neophytes at the missions.

The mission in its dual role as an institution of colonial control and as an economic enterprise became the dynamo of Hispanic California. The ordained role of the mission as a frontier institution was the Christianization and Hispanicization of native peoples. This function implied the gathering of Indians into communities which in turn demanded economic activity for their support. To achieve this it was essential that they be trained in agricultural methods and that they acquire skills necessary to support themselves in Hispanic society. The mission theoretically belonged to the Indians with the missionary as a trustee who would oversee the mission until the natives had been Hispanicized. Ideally, the process was expected to take ten years but in practice, no mission was turned over to its

Indian residents during the fifty-two years of Spanish domination in California. The missionaries themselves were acutely aware of the economic role of the mission. In addition to the obvious requisite of Indians, mission sites were selected with an eye to the fertility of the soil, the availability of water and the proximity of timber. After 1780 the missions approached agricultural self-sufficiency and assumed the role of supplying the military, which it had been hoped civilian settlement would fill.

The economic role of the mission was further enhanced by the dislocations caused by the Mexican independence movement after 1810. The tenuous maritime link with San Blas was snapped and the missions became responsible for the economic survival of California. Only the missions possessed the surplus products which could be exchanged with outsiders for necessary items not produced in California. As sources for trade goods and cash loaned and given to the military, the missions became, in effect, California's first banks. Without the excess produce of the missions, commercial relations with outsiders, both Spanish and foreign, would have been impossible and the very existence of Spanish California would have been in question.

As artisans from Mexico taught their skills to Indian neophytes, the missions supplied the military with their products and with skilled labor. It was the mission trained Indian who supplied clothing, shoes, saddles, weapons and a myriad of other goods in addition to building harbors, gun emplacements, homes, churches and government buildings.

The California missions as frontier institutions, must be viewed as pastoral, agricultural, mercantile and financial organizations. It is the development of these economic functions which this work will explore.

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---|
| AAFH | Academy of American Franciscan History |
| AASF | Archive of the Archbishop of San Francisco |
| AGI | Archivo General de Indias |
| AGN | Archivo General de la Nación |
| BNM | Archivo de la Biblioteca Nacional de Mexico |
| BL | Bancroft Library |
| CHSQ | <i>California Historical Society Quarterly</i> |
| DHM | Documentos para la Historia de México (AGN) |
| DML | Doheny Memorial Library |
| HAHR | <i>Hispanic American Historical Review</i> |
| HL | Huntington Library |
| JAH | <i>Journal of Agricultural History</i> |
| MNM | Archivo del Museo Nacional |
| SBMA | Santa Barbara Mission Archives |
| SCHSQ | <i>Southern California Historical Society Quarterly</i> |
| UTA | University of Texas Archives |

THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS
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Economic Features of Institutes of Government



IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, SPAIN CLUNG tenaciously to mercantilist economic theory which had served her in the past. The idea that colonial economies were to be complementary and supplementary to that of the mother country was extended to the frontier outpost of California. Combined with this was a long tradition of Hapsburg and Bourbon absolutism which extended royal power to the smallest detail. Hence, it is not surprising to find a series of provisions designed to regulate the economy of California. From 1768 to 1781, various *reglamentos* determined the future course of the California economy. For early Hispanic California, the regulations were crucial. A frontier situation combined with geographic isolation made every peso and every parcel shipped from San Blas of utmost importance. A bureaucratic delay or error or a shipwreck was a matter affecting survival. Consequently, quarrels and deep concern surrounded what from our vantage point seem to be minor items. Economically, Alta California was balanced precipitously from 1769 to 1781 with only a gradual improvement. It was in Lower California and under the auspices of José de Gálvez, the great Visitor-General, that the first orders for Alta California were given.

By 1768 Spanish fear of Russian encroachments extending from Kamtchatka to the Aleutian Islands had set in motion events which were to result in the Spanish occupation of Alta California. News of the Russian movements at the Spanish court prompted the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, The Marques de Grimaldi, to warn Viceroy Francisco de Croix to instruct the new governor of Lower California, Don Gaspar de Portolá, to be vigilant and to report any Russian activity.¹ Simultaneously, in Mexico, the Viceroy and the famous Visitor-General, José de Gálvez, sent a joint dispatch to the King announcing Gálvez' intentions to visit the northwest provinces of New Spain, including Lower California, because of

¹ El Marqués de Grimaldi to Viceroy de Croix, Madrid, January 23, 1768, AGN. Provincias Internas. Vol, 154. Transcript in SBMA.

"unsettled conditions." The dispatch emphasized the Russian threat and announced a plan for the occupation of Upper California.² In April of 1768 Gálvez left Mexico and on July 5th he arrived near La Paz in Lower California. In route he had received a letter from Grimaldi, transmitted by the Viceroy, ordering Gálvez to take possession of the ports of San Diego and Monterey to preserve California from a Russian seizure.³ It was Gálvez, in Lower California, who with precedents set there and with orders given for New California, began to lay the basis for the new establishments soon to be founded by the "Sacred Expedition."

With expulsion of the Jesuits from all of Spain's New World colonies in 1767, including Lower California, the economic administration of these missions had been assigned to the military with disastrous results. The continuation of this system and the extension of it to Alta California would have drastically altered the future economic development of the missions. Of all government regulations, the decision of Gálvez to restore the earlier *status quo* was most momentous for the future economy of California. Regarding this, the Father Guardian of the Franciscan College of *San Fernando de Mexico* wrote in 1771 to the Royal Fiscal, Don Manuel Lans de Casafonda:

Some soldier commissioners succeeded the expelled Jesuits and in a little more than six months one of them killed 600 head of cattle at his mission, another 400, others 300, the destruction of others being the same as is apparent from the accounts the commissioners handed in. It was these actions that motivated the visitor to place the fathers in charge of mission temporalities. As a matter of fact this is the only way they can subsist if they are aided by the proper means.⁴

Although Fray Francisco Palóu protested that, "they (the Franciscans) were very far from seeking the management of the temporalities," Gálvez made the necessary agreements with Fray Junípero Serra for their transfer.⁵

On July 26, 1768 Gálvez notified Serra, who at the time was Father-President of the Lower California missions, of his decision to restore the temporalities to the missionaries. At the same time the visitor decided that the temporalities of the contemplated missions of Alta California would also be administered by the Franciscans assigned to them. It was provided

² Plan para la Erección de un Gobierno y Comandancia General que comprehenda la Peninsula de Californias y las Provincias de Sinaloa, Sonora y Nueva Vizcaya. Carlos de Croix to José de Gálvez, Mexico, January 23, 1768, AGN. Provincias Internas. Vol. 154.

³ Herbert I. Priestley, *José de Gálvez, Visitor General of New Spain, 1765-1771*. Berkeley 1916, 248.

⁴ Verger to Manuel Lans de Casafonda. Mexico, June 30, 1771. AGN. Colección de Documentos para la Historia de Mexico. Segunda serie, Vol. 5. Ed. and trans. in Maynard Geiger, "Fray Rafael Verger and the California Mission Enterprise," *SCHSQ*, Vol. 49, 1967, 205-231.

⁵ Herbert E. Bolton, ed., *Palóu's New California*, 4 vols.: Berkeley, 1926, Vol. I, 36.

that the soldier commissioners, in whose hands the economic management rested, were to turn over immediately the temporalities to the Franciscan missionaries.⁶

The crucial decision regarding economic affairs being made, Gálvez and Serra moved to make the financial arrangements necessary for the success of the Alta California missions. The two conferred in Lower California and reached agreement regarding salaries to be paid and the number of missionaries to reside at each of the new establishments. Referring to Franciscan preference to be assigned in pairs, Gálvez wrote to the viceroy that, "the Franciscan missionaries want to live two to a mission because their order lives in communities and so they can help each other when sick and in spiritual administration."⁷ Consequently it was agreed that two missionaries would be assigned to each mission and that each missionary would receive an annual stipend from the Pious Fund of 350 pesos. The stipend was justified by Gálvez because of the isolation of the new province. Out of this stipend each missionary was to receive by ship, free of freight cost, up to six arrobas (150 pounds) of goods per year.⁸ It was arranged that each year the appropriate monies were to be transferred from the administrator of the Pious Fund to the syndic of the College of San Fernando.⁹

The Pious Fund was accumulated by the Jesuits for the support of their establishments in Lower California beginning in 1698. The fund was donated by wealthy residents of New Spain and Europe who hoped in this fashion to ease their way to heaven. Management of the monies which were invested and loaned was in the hands of the Jesuits until their expulsion in 1767. Control then went to the State which in accordance with the wishes of the original contributors set up the fund in trust for the support of the California missions.¹⁰

Viceroy Croix also allowed 1000 pesos for the founding of each new

⁶ Gálvez to Serra, Santa Ana, July 26, 1768, Private collection, Mexico City. Transcript in SBMA. Temporalities is used synonymously with economic affairs which are temporal as opposed to spiritual.

⁷ Gálvez to the Viceroy, La Paz, December 16, 1768, AGI. Guadalajara, 416. Photostat in SBMA.

⁸ Gálvez, Reglamento acordados y convenidos con el Padre Presidente de las Misiones en 30 de Noviembre de 1768, La Paz, November 30, 1768, AGI. Photostat in SBMA.

⁹ Gálvez to Viceroy, Alamos, June 10, 1769, AGI. Guadalajara 416. Photostat in SBMA. The College of San Fernando in Mexico City was the missionary college which supplied Franciscans for the Alta California missions. Because Franciscans took a vow of poverty, a lay syndic or treasurer was appointed to handle financial affairs.

¹⁰ Kenneth M. Johnson, *The Pious Fund*, Los Angeles, 1963, 16-19. Further history of the Fund may be found in *United States vs. Mexico, Report of Jackson Ralston in the matter of the Pious Fund of the Californias*, Washington, 1902. And in Francis Weber, *The Pious Fund*, Los Angeles, 1969.

mission and directed that the necessary money be released from the Pious Fund to the syndic of the College of San Fernando.¹¹

While expenditures for salaries and new missions were in the spirit of the Pious Fund, other disbursements were more questionable. The settlement of California was prompted by international strategy and the mission was auxiliary to that consideration. Hence, the expenditure of mission funds for the support of military aims hardly seems justifiable. Yet expenditures were made from the Pious Fund for royal warehouses, naval expenses and for the outfitting of exploring expeditions. In 1773 the director of the fund reported that by viceregal decree, approximately 136,000 pesos had been expended on the Naval Department of San Blas, on the royal warehouse at Loreto and on the land and sea expeditions to San Diego and Monterey.¹² The following year 10,000 pesos were appropriated from the fund for the second Anza expedition to California. These disbursements should be considered subsidies from mission funds to the government.¹³

In August of 1771 the Father Guardian of the College of San Fernando, Fray Rafael Verger, described some of the other provisions made by Gálvez and criticized the visitor's seeming lack of attention to the real financial needs of the new missions.¹⁴ Verger complained that 350 pesos per missionary could not possibly suffice for missions so isolated and separated by 800 leagues from Mexico City. Secondly, how could 1000 pesos be made to suffice for the founding of a new mission? From Mexico City the missions had to be provided with all agricultural implements, a complete carpenter shop, eating and cooking utensils and even all of the tools for stone masons. Church ornaments had to be obtained and houses and storerooms had to be constructed. Laborers from New Spain had to be paid and cattle as well as grain had to be provided. In addition, items such as tobacco were required to attract neophytes to the missions. All of the necessities, Verger claimed, amounted to well over 1000 pesos.

Verger, a confirmed pessimist, was skeptical concerning the future of the new missions. He generally felt that Gálvez' planning had been haphazard and insufficient. Costs, he felt, were exorbitant and the loss of ships and lives prohibitive. Although the Father Guardian's complaints were not acted upon immediately, and his letter was probably lost in a

¹¹ De Croix to Fages, Mexico, November 12, 1770, AGN. Californias-Correspondencia, 1761-1773. Vol. 66.

¹² Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 117.

¹³ Charles E. Chapman, *The Founding of Spanish California: the Northward Expansion of New Spain, 1687-1783*. New York, 1916, 467.

¹⁴ Verger to Manuel Lans de Casafonda, Mexico, June 30, 1771, AGN. Colección de Documentos para la Historia de México. Segunda Serie, Vol. 15.

bureaucratic maze, many of his complaints would be echoed by Serra in 1773 and would be remedied in the *Echeveste Reglamento* of that year.

California from 1769 to 1773 was a typical frontier whose institutions were only beginning to adapt themselves to a unique situation. Relationships between church and state, complicated by the special relationship between the Spanish Monarchy and the Catholic hierarchy, were only beginning to be defined in the new province. The economic role of the missions had hardly begun to take shape. The system of supply from Mexico had, at best, been sporadic and no firm decision had been rendered on whether the route was to be overland or by sea. Meanwhile, California existed on the verge of starvation. Problems were intensified by bitter disagreements between Father President Junípero Serra and Governor Pedro Fages.

To seek solutions to these problems, Junípero Serra left California for the Viceregal Court and arrived in Mexico City in February of 1773. Serra immediately had a conference with Bucareli, the new viceroy. Bucareli requested that Serra draw up a report with suggestions for the improvement of the situation in Alta California. Serra went quickly to work and completed his revealing report on March 9th.¹⁵

The memorial contained a number of financial recommendations. Serra suggested that although a supernumerary, he was entitled as Father President, to an annual stipend. The annual stipend of 350 pesos agreed upon with Gálvez ought to be raised to 400 pesos. The presidial accounts which had remained at Loreto in Lower California ought to be transferred to Monterey and a royal warehouse established. Price regulations should also be drawn up. Soldiers, since they were paid in goods at a high markup from Mexico prices, should have salary increases. Also with respect to the military, *escoltas* assigned to missions should serve at the pleasure of the missionary in charge.¹⁶

Shortage of laborers also prompted Serra to request that peons be sent from New Spain to cultivate mission lands. Sailors from San Blas should be sent to provide labor with the option of leaving after one year. The sailors, he hoped, would be paid by the auditor at San Blas, while the missions would provide free rations. Indian families from Lower California could be sent to provide both labor and a Christian example for the neophytes.

¹⁵ *Representación* of Serra to Bucareli, Mexico, March 9, 1773. Certified copy made in 1773 in SBMA, also trans. in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 3-36.

¹⁶ A supernumerary was a missionary in excess of the two normally assigned to a mission and thus not entitled to a stipend. The *escolta* was a military detachment of 5-10 men assigned as a mission guard under a corporal. Control of the *escolta* was a constant source of argument between Governor Fages and Serra.

Bitter conflict with Governor Fages prompted Serra to request that shipments destined for the missions be marked separately from those for presidios and guards. This procedure had been followed in the first year, but subsequently the commissary at San Blas had sent it all to Fages which had caused much disagreement. This point was part and parcel of the labor problem. Fages had withheld food supplies which made it impossible to attract Indian neophytes. No one would voluntarily subject himself to possible starvation.

By 1773 the missions felt an acute need for the products of blacksmiths and carpenters in quantities which could not be supplied from Mexico. In consequence, Serra felt that it was imperative that a blacksmith be provided for San Diego which had already been supplied with a forge. Sending all metal implements, including axes and hoes, from Mission San Diego to the presidio of Monterey for repairs was time consuming and expensive. A forge and blacksmith for Mission San Carlos was also requested. Iron had to be sent for the forges. In addition, the missions were in need of carpenters and requisite tools.

In Serra's opinion a large part of the supply problem was due to inefficient and, sometimes, dishonest management of the Naval Department of San Blas. Often, he complained, corn was loaded in a damaged and worm eaten condition and likewise with the rest of the provisions. Meat, when it was shipped at all, was so worm eaten as to be worthless despite the plentiful supply of cattle in the neighborhood of San Blas. Six ounces of meat was supposed to be the daily ration, but none had been available for two years. Packing and loading were often done haphazardly. Flour, for example, was loaded in sacks of loosely woven agave fiber which allowed it to leak out. Serra felt that it was essential that measures in San Blas and California be standardized. The commissary at San Blas had been using a fanega measure of $9\frac{1}{2}$ or 10 *almuds*, while Serra correctly maintained that it should contain twelve almuds. To insure standardization, he suggested that a set of measures be made at San Blas for each of the missions consisting of a half fanega, an almud, half almud and a quarter almud. In this fashion, frauds would be eliminated.¹⁷ Related to the supply problem was the chronic lack of mules in Alta California with which to distribute shipments. This was blamed on Fages who had commandeered mules for use by the military.

The Father President's petition was sent by the Viceroy to the Royal Council of War and Exchequer and a decision was reached by the council

¹⁷ The fanega was approximately 1.6 bushels and there were approximately 12 almuds in a fanega. See Manuel Carrera Stampa, "The Evolution of Weights and Measures in New Spain," *HAHR*, Vol. 30, 1950, 9-20. And J. N. Bowman, "Weights and Measures of Provincial California," *CHSQ*, Vol. 30, 1952, 315-338.

on May 6, 1773. Serra, as a supernumerary was to receive a stipend. *Escoltas* were to be under the control of the missionaries. Sailors from San Blas were to be sent to work at the missions, but it was stipulated that they could not be forced to stay beyond one year.¹⁸

In accordance with Serra's request, goods shipped for the missions were to be marked separately. The junta agreed that the blacksmiths, forge and iron would be provided, along with the carpenters requested. Mail sent from California to the College of San Fernando was to be delivered without charge. Measures were to be regulated in the manner suggested. The commissary at San Blas was enjoined to ship only provisions in good condition. The council reserved decision on Serra's other requests for the *reglamento* which was to be drawn up by Juan José de Echeveste.

On May 24, 1773, Juan José de Echeveste, with unusual dispatch, presented the awaited *reglamento* to Viceroy Bucareli.¹⁹ Stimulated by a letter which Serra had written to Viceroy Antonio María Bucareli relating his suspicions of mismanagement at San Blas and by his complaints in this petition, the *reglamento* provided for continuation of the naval supply service and its reorganization.²⁰ The efficiency of the other end of the supply line was to be improved with establishment of a royal warehouse, and storekeeper's offices at Monterey and at San Diego.²¹ Salaries of the military were increased, but this was offset by the stipulation that payment was to be made in clothing and goods at 150 percent over Mexico City cost. It was determined that the state of the Royal Exchequer and of the Pious Fund was such that no new establishments were to be permitted in Alta California for the time being. The annual stipend of the missionaries was raised to 800 pesos per mission and new missions were permitted double this amount for their first five years. Serra had requested that a fixed price schedule be drawn up for California. This, Echeveste did not allow. He proposed a fluctuating scale of prices. Prices in Mexico varied according to the levels of supply and demand and prices in California should be permitted to do likewise. Prices were to be determined at 150 percent over the Mexico cost which would be listed in the invoices. On this

¹⁸ Judgment of the Junta de Guerra y Hacienda, Mexico, May 6, 1773. Certified copy as of May 13, 1773 in SBMA. Trans. in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 37-55.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, III, 57-77. Palóu reprints the entire text of the *reglamento*.

²⁰ Serra to the Viceroy, April, 22, 1773, Mexico, SBMA. Trans. in Antonine Tibesar, *The Writings of Junípero Serra*, 4 vols.: Washington, D. C., 1955, I, 331-343. For a thorough discussion of the effects of the *reglamento* on San Blas, see Michael Thurman, *The Naval Department of San Blas: New Spain's Bastion for Alta California and Nootka, 1767-1798*, Glendale, California, 1967, 105-124.

²¹ The storekeeper was the *guarda-almacen*. The office of *Habilitado* was not instituted until Neve's *Reglamento* of 1781, although the function was similar. See Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of California*, 7 vol.: San Francisco, 1886-1890, I, 335.

basis storekeepers at San Diego and Monterey were to determine retail prices.

The contemplated regulation was then sent to the *fiscal*, José Areche, for his written opinion.²² The *fiscal* approved the regulation but felt that a report should be elicited from the director of the Pious Fund concerning finances. The director of the Pious Fund, Fernando José Mangino, submitted his report on June 19, 1773.²³ It was his opinion that the fund should not be burdened with the increased salaries of the missionaries and he further recommended that only one missionary be assigned to each mission to reduce expenses. In brief, the report pointed out that the total available revenue was 20,687 pesos, though a large part of the income came from sheep ranches which were subject to wide fluctuations in yield. The current liability for mission stipends was 14,879 pesos which left only 5,808 pesos to pay the total proposed increase of 11,779 pesos. The amount available could be augmented by 2,662 pesos if the colleges were ordered to pay 5 percent on loans.

The regulation, together with the various reports so far solicited, was once again remitted to the Royal Council of War and Exchequer for its final decision.²⁴ The Junta gave final approval of the new *reglamento* but ignored Mangino's report on the Pious Fund.²⁵ The fund was assessed a one time only contribution of 10,000 pesos for the rejuvenated Department of San Blas. On July 23, Bucareli decreed the *reglamento* provisionally in effect until final approval could be secured from Spain.²⁶

While the *Echeveste Reglamento* was actuated by a desire to reduce conflict and to put California on a more secure economic basis, it created problems as well as solved them. The provision for double rations for the first five years led to a running conflict. Double rations were also allowed to Fathers, who as supernumeraries, were awaiting the founding of their missions. A single ration was computed at 1½ reales per day with a real equal to one-eighth of a peso. A total double ration was about 137 pesos per year. Fernando Rivera y Moncada, as governor of Alta California, had allowed the rations to be delivered regularly after he replaced Pedro Fages in 1774. With the accession of Felipe de Neve to the governorship in February of 1775 conflict ensued.²⁷

²² The *fiscal's* opinion of June 14, 1773 may be found in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 78-89.

²³ Don Fernando Mangino's Report on the Pious Fund may be found in *Ibid.*, III, 90-99.

²⁴ Decree of the Viceroy, Mexico, June 22, 1773 as printed in *Ibid.*, III, 99-100.

²⁵ Decision of the Royal Council of War and Exchequer, Mexico, July 8, 1773 as printed in *Ibid.*, III, 101-110.

²⁶ Decree of the Viceroy, Mexico, July 23, 1773. Certified copy as of July 29, 1773 in SBMA. Also see Bolton, *Palóu's New California* III, 110-114.

²⁷ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries of California*, 5 vols.: San Francisco, 1908,

In October of 1778 the feud began in earnest when Neve addressed a letter to Fray Francisco Palóu and the Fathers of San Francisco and Santa Clara informing them that he was suspending the double ration because of scarcity of provisions for the troops at the presidio. He justified his action by reminding the Fathers that the provisional *Echeveste Reglamento* had never been confirmed by the King.²⁸ In their reply, Fray Francisco Palóu of Mission Dolores and Fray Jose Murguía of Mission Santa Clara claimed that the *reglamento* was law unless specifically disallowed by the King which had not been done. The rations, they claimed, were essential to attract neophytes who would labor at the mission until the mission itself produced enough to feed them.²⁹ Neve replied that the rations had not been intended for Santa Clara, San Francisco and San Juan Capistrano since they had not been established when the *reglamento* had been promulgated.³⁰ Ultimately, the Father President, Junípero Serra wrote to Neve justifying the position of the missionaries. Serra stated that if it had been known that the rations would be withheld, the northern missions would not have been founded.³¹ The conflict finally reached Viceroy Martín de Mayorga who wrote to the Commandant General of the *Provincias Internas*, the Caballero de Croix, that he felt the double rations ought to be continued with the exception of those missions which raised enough grain to feed both religious and neophytes.³² Meanwhile, on February 11th, de Croix had dispatched a note to Neve ordering him to restore the rations to San Francisco, Santa Clara and San Juan Capistrano.³³ Thus the dispute ended.

The *Echeveste Reglamento* was by far the most significant legislation for the governance of California. With some modification it remained in effect until the end of the Spanish period in 1821. It was substantially modified by a *reglamento* drawn up by Felipe de Neve which went into effect in the beginning of 1781. It was prompted by the creation of the *Provincias Internas* and by the changing situation in California, particularly the increasing maturity of the missions. The *reglamento* also sought

II, 301-313. Technically Fages and Rivera y Moncada had been Lt. Governors of Alta California with the Governor residing at Loreto in Lower California. With the appointment of Felipe de Neve the situation was reversed.

²⁸ Neve to Palóu, Monterey, October 7, 1778. SBMA.

²⁹ Palóu and Murguía to Neve, San Francisco, October 12, 1778. SBMA.

³⁰ Neve to Palóu and Murguía, Monterey, November 5, 1778. SBMA.

³¹ Serra to Neve, Mission San Carlos, January 5, 1779, AGN. Californias, Vol. 71.

³² Mayorga to de Croix, Mexico, March 29, 1780, SBMA. On August 26, 1776 the separate governmental unit known as the *Provincias Internas* was created including all of New Spain's northern frontier. Nominally California was under the Commandant's-General after August 22, 1776.

³³ de Croix to Neve, Arispe, February 10, 1780, AGN. Californias, Vol. 71. Photograph in SBMA. See Edwin A. Beilharz, *Felipe de Neve—First Governor of California*. San Francisco, 1971.

to apply to California the "Royal Regulation for Frontier Presidios" of 1772.³⁴

Neve's *Reglamento* recognized the growing prosperity of the missions by providing that:

Whenever the sowing, harvesting and storing of crops in the new settlements is advanced so that the garrisons can provide themselves in whole or in part with the needed provision, the paymasters will ask for the sum of money corresponding to their purchase price, above that already indicated, subtracting the equivalent from the San Blas Requisition for seeds and proportionately from the cost of supplying them.

Items shipped from San Blas were reduced in price from the old 150 percent over cost to an amount equal to their cost in San Blas with no added charge for transportation. This move was practically nullified by a reduction in the pay of soliders of about 40 percent. Of significance for future relations between mission and presidio, Neve's *Reglamento* suggested that the new office of *Habilitado* be created with expanded authority over that of the old presidial storekeeper.

In a move which caused much consternation among the missionaries, Neve proposed a reorganization of the mission system which would have reduced the Fathers at each mission from two to one. The annual stipend of 400 pesos and 1,000 pesos for the founding of each new mission was confirmed. This proposal was in direct conflict with the agreement made between Serra and Gálvez under which the Franciscans accepted the Alta California mission field. In addition there were to be no temporalities associated with the missions. Missions were to consist only of their church and priest's dwelling.

Neve's proposal for mission reorganization had been stimulated by the plans which Commandant General Theodoro de Croix was making for the establishment of the "Mongrel Missions" at the Yuma crossing. These missions were finally established in 1780 but the following year was one of cruel disappointment for Croix's plans. On July 17, 1781, the Yuma revolted and killed two friars and all male colonists at Mission San Pedro y San Pablo while taking women and children captive. The following day another Yuma band attacked Mission Purísima Concepción and killed Rivera y Moncada and his detachment. Luckily, Rivera had sent the expedition of forty recruits and their families destined to found Los Angeles on their way to Alta California. Reverberations of the massacre reached to Neve's plan for the missions of California. Streamlining the missions at the expense of security was dropped.

³⁴ Provisional Reglamento of Neve, Monterey, June 1, 1779. It bears the title: "Reglamento Provisional Para la Peninsula de Californias formado por su Gobernador el Coronel de Cavalleria Don Phelipe de Neve en virtud de superior Orden, Año de 1779. AGN. Provincias Internas, Vol. 121. Trans. by Charles F. Lummis, "Regulations and Instructions," *Land of Sunshine*, Vol. 6, 1896, 78-82, 117-120, 153-156, 193-196, 251-253. A translation of the *Reglamento* for Presidios may be found in Sidney B. Brinkerhoff and Odie B. Faulk, *Lancers for the King*, Phoenix, 1965.

Price Regulation



IN ADDITION TO *REGLAMENTOS* SUCH AS Echeveste's and Neve's, which formed the framework for the economy of Hispanic California, very comprehensive and specific price regulations were drawn up as the need for them became apparent. In the eighteenth century the Spanish Crown regarded the setting of maximum prices as a legitimate function. The prices set were intended to be fair to producers, consumers and employees of the Spanish government living on fixed incomes. Fixed prices in California were of two varieties. As pointed out previously, prices were limited on those goods coming from San Blas with a view to keeping the cost of living within the limits of military salaries in Alta California. In the late 1770's mission agriculture began to produce surpluses. For a number of years the only significant outlet for this excess was the military establishment. Because it removed the burden of providing staples from the Naval Department of San Blas, the Crown willingly turned to the missions as a source of supply. The missions gradually assumed the monopoly of provisioning the military, which had belonged to San Blas. In order to ensure that military salaries would suffice to keep body and soul together and to protect them from price gouging the government determined that price regulation was essential. A third type of pricing also existed, although not subject to regulation. Smuggling began to develop after 1800 and reached a fever pitch when the San Blas link was interrupted after 1810 and of course prices were subject only to what the market would bear. Trade with Spanish nationals from Peru and New Spain, although legal, was also unregulated.

The first price list for Alta California was promulgated by José de Gálvez in Lower California, although the list itself has not been found. Evidence for its existence can be found in a letter by Governor Felipe de Neve promulgating an *assize* for Baja California on January 1, 1781. In his preface, Neve comments that he has taken account of prices established by Gálvez's decree of October 12, 1768, but that because of changing conditions he has modified many prices.³⁵ Further information on the Gálvez decree is provided by Palóu who states that because he had reduced

³⁵ Neve's *assize* for Baja California, Monterey, January 1, 1781, AGN. Californias, Vol. 48 (2).

soldiers' wages, Gálvez also reduced prices.³⁶ The price of every item which he anticipated would be sold to the royal warehouse at Loreto was fixed. Since it was not until the *Echeveste Reglamento* that royal warehouses were also established for Alta California, it is reasonable to assume that these prices also applied there. Since the early missions in Upper California were themselves on the verge of starvation and hence could sell little to the military, Gálvez's price list must have had little practical effect.

Palóu goes on to note a few of the prices established by Gálvez. In general, they reflect the paucity of agricultural production in Lower California since even the lower prices established are in many cases double the prices later fixed for Upper California. Corn was fixed at 3½ pesos per fanega, beans and chickpeas at 5 pesos. Lard was priced at 3 pesos per arrobo. Limits were also set for meat, tallow, candles, wine, brandy and figs. A discriminatory pricing policy was established for the last three items which were to be sold at a lower price to the royal warehouse than to others.³⁷

The *Echeveste Reglamento* of 1773 stipulated that the troops of New California were to be paid at "their respective posts in clothing and goods at purchase price, increased by 150 percent." No such surcharge was applied to the missions. The *reglamento* stated that missions were to be erected "without any assignment for the costs and expenses borne by Royal Exchequer." Further, stipends and double rations were to be paid "according to their value in San Blas."³⁸ While in Mexico in 1773-74, Serra signed a list of goods at Tepic destined for the California missions. This is one of a few itemized invoices which includes prices.³⁹ I list here a few items commonly found among these early shipments from San Blas. Costs have been reduced to a per unit price.

TABLE I
SELECTED SHIPMENTS FROM SAN BLAS

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| A bolt of cotton..... | 4½ reales |
| A shirt..... | 18 reales |
| A <i>vara</i> of burlap..... | 2½ reales |
| Wool stockings..... | 7 reales |
| One pair of leather boots..... | 4½ reales |
| Bobbin of white thread..... | 2 reales |
| A rope..... | 2 reales |
| A <i>carga</i> of flour..... | 12 pesos |
| A <i>carga</i> of sacks..... | 4 reales ⁴⁰ |

³⁶ Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, I, 77.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 77.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, III, 57-77.

³⁹ List of merchandise for California drawn up at Guadalajara, December 15, 1773 and received by Serra at Tepic, January 14, 1774. BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photograph in SBMA, also in Tibesar, *Writings of Junípero Serra*, II, 14-17.

⁴⁰ A good approximation for the *vara* is the English yard although a closer value is 33 inches.

By the terms of the *Echeveste Reglamento*, 150 percent of the above prices were paid by the military.

A list of goods received in various years at Mission San Carlos provides a more comprehensive index to prices paid by military and missionary for goods received from San Blas.⁴¹

TABLE 2

PRICES FOR GOODS RECEIVED AT
MISSION SAN CARLOS

| | | |
|------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1771 | Sombrero with cord..... | 4 pesos |
| 1772 | A barrel of wine | 25 pesos, 7 reales |
| | 500 iron nails..... | 6 pesos |
| | Door lock with key..... | 1 peso, 2 reales |
| | File..... | 3½ reales |
| 1773 | A pair of sandals..... | 1 peso |
| | A pound of fine gunpowder | 1 peso |
| | 4 pounds of fish..... | 2 reales |
| | 4 arrobas of ham | 22 pesos |
| | ½ fanega of beans in sacks..... | 2 pesos, 1 real |
| | A carpenter's hatchet..... | 2 pesos |
| | One dozen shoes..... | 7 pesos |
| 1784 | A vara of serge..... | 6 reales |
| | A vara of coarse linen | 3 reales |

Eighteenth century prices are generally meaningless to the twentieth century observer, as are any attempts to convert them to current prices. They do, however, acquire some meaning when compared with incomes. As of 1774, the private soldier was paid 325 pesos annually while each mission received 800 pesos for its support.

Serra had attempted in 1773 to have a price list drawn up for Alta California, but had failed. Instead, Echeveste's suggestion that prices be calculated on the basis of San Blas costs was adopted. There is no evidence that a price list was ever drawn up to cover goods shipped from San Blas.

By 1781 the missions had reached that stage of development which enabled them to provide foodstuffs for the military and for transport vessels. The price regulation which was promulgated was apparently intended to prevent the missions from taking advantage of their monopoly until civilian settlements offered competition to them.⁴² In this spirit,

The *carga*, like most weights and measures of the time, was unstandardized but when used as a weight probably was about 16 arrobas or 400 pounds.

⁴¹Accounts of Mission San Carlos signed by Fray José Mariano de Murguía, Mexico, November 15, 1784. AGN. Photograph in SBMA. Murguía was procurator at the College of San Fernando.

⁴²Governor Borica to the Viceroy, Marques de Branciforte, Monterey, August 4, 1791, AGN. Californias, Vol. 48, Part II.

Felipe de Neve released his famous decree of January 1, 1781.⁴³ In a cover letter to his price list, Neve said that:

All the effects and domesticated animals are regulated in proportion to the prices which respectively were set by the *reglamento* formed by Gálvez in Lower California with a small increase or decrease in various items according to demands of less abundance and the better or poorer quality of them. With respect to maize, frijoles and garbanzos as well as flour I have been governed by the prices which those items bear when sent from San Blas.⁴⁴

The Governor pointed out in the preamble to his decree that it was to regulate the prices of produce and other items which were indispensable for the existence of the inhabitants. As previously mentioned, Neve's *Reglamento* was in large part a revision of Gálvez's list for Baja California. The following items included in the price list were of particular significance because of their importance in the California economy: a milk cow, 5 pesos; an arroba of jerked beef, 1 peso; an arroba of tallow, 1 peso, 4 reales; a tanned cowhide, 2 pesos, 4 reales; a fanega of wheat, 2 pesos; a fanega of corn, 1 peso, 4 reales; an arroba of fine flour, 2 pesos; for an ordinary broken horse, 9 pesos; and for a broken he-mule, 18 pesos.

Neve's list was, of course, confined to those items which were produced in Alta California. It was never intended to regulate shipments from San Blas. In all, it set prices for sixty-three items. Included were processed and unprocessed foodstuffs and animal by-products such as lard, tallow, meat and hides. In addition, wild game such as rabbit, quail and deerskins were listed. Products of mechanical arts such as weaving and blacksmithing were not included since, as yet, the missions were not even self-sufficient in those products.

This price regulation could not have been what Serra had envisaged in his petition to the viceroy in March of 1773. If Serra had expected prices to be similar to those set by Gálvez for Baja California, he was soon disillusioned. Apparently prices which Neve set were one-half to one-third those set by Gálvez. That the price regulations became a constant point of contention between presidio and mission is not surprising. The prospering missions were soon demanding more manufactured and luxury items than could be encompassed in their 800 peso per mission allowance. By supplying the military they could earn credits on the Royal Treasury in Mexico City which were easily converted into shipments to Alta California. While it is true that the missions had a monopoly of production, it is

⁴³ Decree of Felipe de Neve, Monterey, January 1, 1781, SBMA. Also in AGN, California, Vol. 48, Part II. Also see Sanford A. Mosk, "Price-Fixing in Spanish California," *CHSQ*, Vol. 17, 1938, 118-22.

⁴⁴ Neve to de Croix, Monterey, March 4, 1781, AGN. Californias, Vol. 71. Photostat in SBMA.

also true that the presidios had a monopoly of consumption. Missions, badly in need of exchange credits, had little choice but to sell their products to the presidios even at what they regarded as artificially low prices. The military, understandably, were attempting to stretch their limited salaries as far as possible.

Most of the invoices of goods shipped from San Blas in the early years do not list prices, making comparison with Neve's assize near impossible. By 1781, when the price regulation went into effect, the missions were no longer depending on grain from Mexico, hence, it is not mentioned in invoices. Neve had no incentive to regulate prices of items which were not produced at the missions and which were obtained from Mexico. However, a couple of items may provide some basis for comparison. A fanega of beans from San Blas sold in California for 4 pesos, 2 reales without adding the 150 percent surcharge for the military. An arroba of ham sold for 5 pesos, 4 reales when shipped from New Spain, again before surcharge. Neve's list specified that the missions were to provide beans at three pesos per arroba and ham at four pesos per arroba.⁴⁵ It would seem that the missionaries had legitimate complaints in the quarrels which ensued over prices.

Disagreements over prices did not originate with the price regulation, but began as soon as surpluses existed which could be sold to the military. Disagreement began in 1780 over the relative value of corn and wheat. The three southern missions of San Diego, San Juan Capistrano and San Gabriel had been ordered by the Lieutenant and the supply officer at San Diego to supply wheat to their respective *escoltas* at ten pesos per fanega.⁴⁶ Afterwards, Governor Neve had ordered that wheat was to be supplied at the same price as corn regardless of quality. The Lieutenant had justified this new regulation by saying that:

Following out this line of thought, when, last year the Governor came to the assistance of the San Carlos Mission with 21 fanegas of wheat, he had not the least scruple in permitting payment for them to be made in a like number of fanegas of corn. Although this exchange was never put into effect, because of shortage in the corn harvest, it can serve as a precedent for your Reverence.⁴⁷

Serra reminded Neve that, in fact, when it had come time to repay the presidio he had informed Father Francisco Dumetz that payment should

⁴⁵ The figures were derived from the Decree of Felipe de Neve, Monterey, January 1, 1781, SBMA, and accounts of Mission San Carlos signed by Fray José Mariano de Murguía, Mexico, November 15, 1784, AGN. Photograph in SBMA.

⁴⁶ This was Lieutenant José Francisco Ortega and Rafael de Pedro y Gil, who was storekeeper at San Diego.

⁴⁷ José Francisco Ortega to Fray Fermín Francisco de Lasuén. San Diego, February 26, 1780 as quoted in Serra to Neve, Monterey, April 18, 1780. SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, III, 429-439.

be made in thirteen fanegas, eight almuds of wheat plus eight of corn which were immediately repaid.⁴⁸ The storekeeper, who was apparently confused, demanded from Father Dumetz the eight fanegas of corn which he believed was missing. The Governor had then informed the storekeeper that he had thought the matter over and had concluded that corn and wheat were not of equal value. His decision was that wheat was of much greater value, and hence, Mission San Carlos should send the eight fanegas of wheat. In this manner Serra refuted Neve's order that wheat and corn be sold at the same price.⁴⁹

Serra went on to admit to Neve that the Governor possessed the sole and absolute authority to fix prices. He added that it should be kept in mind that the "mission products represent the sweat and toil of ever so many Indians" and that the foodstuffs and clothes provided for them ought to be regarded as acts of charity and, hence, cannot be considered excessive.⁵⁰

This letter makes clear that Neve's price regulation was not the first attempt to fix prices for Alta California, although it was the first systematic scheme. Serra mentions that previously Governor Fernando de Rivera y Moncada had fixed the price of a fanega of corn at five pesos. The argument with Neve indicates that price determination was a product of haggling between mission and presidio. The Father President also informed Neve that "the Father (Lasuén) did not tell me, in his letter, what price wheat was selling for down there," indicating that there was no uniformity in prices. To a large extent, supply and demand must have been allowed free play.⁵¹ Pricing must have, indeed, been confusing and it appears certain that Neve was attempting to impose uniformity in his *reglamento*.

The price regulation of 1781 simply established by statute prices which the missionaries regarded as too low and it elicited a strong protest. This was to be expected since the missions were fast becoming the main source of supply for those items covered by the schedule of maximum prices. The income from these items was providing invaluable revenue for the acquisition of items which the missions lacked.

The price schedule only set maximums which were allowable for specific items. In theory, prices were to be permitted to fluctuate below the level set according to the vagaries of supply and demand.⁵² The heart of

⁴⁸ Again a non-standardized measure, but usually 1/12 of a fanega which equalled 1.6 bushels.

⁴⁹ Serra to Neve, Monterey, April 18, 1780, SBMA. Trans in Tibesar, *Writings of Junipero Serra*, III, 429-439. For a discussion of this conflict see Maynard Geiger, *Life and Times of Junipero Serra*, 2 vols.; Washington, D.C., 1959, Vol. II, 312-313.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Lasuén to Jacobo Ugarte, San Carlos, October 20, 1787, SBMA. Trans. in Kenneally, *The Writings of Lasuén*, 2 vols.: Washington, D.C., 1965, Vol. I, 160-171.

the problem was that price levels were not affected by the quality or quantity of the harvest. Sailors on the supply vessels claimed that they could buy wheat at the province price in California and sell it at San Blas at 100 percent profit.⁵³ This penalized the missions in several ways. Revenues were obviously lost because of a price set at an arbitrary level below what it would have been if prices had been allowed to fluctuate. The exchange rate between Mexico and California was artificially set. Since missions were paid artificially low prices for their products, their purchasing power in Mexico, where prices were higher, was correspondingly reduced.

The early spring of 1786 found the presidios in urgent need of food supplies for which they applied to nearby missions. In March of 1786 the commandant of San Francisco appealed to Fray Tomás de la Peña at Mission Santa Clara for corn to relieve the urgent need of families living at the presidio. According to Governor Fages, Father Peña had refused to deliver the grain and the presidial pack train had returned empty. Lasuén retorted, saying that Father Peña had given what he was able. The Father President had even recommended that Indian neophytes be allowed to leave their missions temporarily, thereby releasing food supplies for the use of the military. Peña had claimed the shortage of supplies was due to the sale of grain to the Manila Galleon as hog feed. In addition, a hundred fanegas were sent to the presidio of Santa Barbara and flour had been sold to the San Blas ship.⁵⁴

The temper of Governor Fages flared. He had the responsibility of seeing to the adequacy of food supplies for the military and their dependents and he would fulfill it. As a concession to the missionaries, he allowed the price of corn to be raised 2 reales from 1 peso, 4 reales per fanega to 1 peso, 6 reales. The price increase was allowed by Fages to be applied retroactively to what the missions of San Carlos and Santa Clara had sold to the presidios of Monterey and San Francisco so far that year. However, Fages insisted, in return, there was to be no more withholding of supplies. He stipulated that the missions were under obligation to give what was necessary until new harvests were brought in, although he did provide that if the supply was hard to obtain, another price might be considered. Fages understood the power of money.⁵⁵

It is clear, however, that for the missions themselves, the spring of 1786 was a time of shortage; they were not simply holding out for a higher price. In 1784 acting Father President Palóu reported that Santa

⁵³ Francis F. Guest, *Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, Washington, D.C. 1973, 151.

⁵⁴ Lasuén to Fages, San Carlos, April 7, 1786, Bancroft, CC-16. Trans. by Kenneally, *The Writings of Lasuén*, I, 104-106. Also see Guest, *Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, 163.

⁵⁵ Lasuén to Fages, San Carlos, May 12, 1786. Bancroft, CC-16. Trans. in Kenneally, *The Writings of Lasuén*, I, 107-109.

Clara had harvested 700 fanegas of corn, while San Carlos harvested 750.⁵⁶ The harvest of 1785, which indicates supplies available in the spring of 1786, was only 260 fanegas of corn at Santa Clara and 160 at San Carlos. A shortage did indeed exist. Not until 1787 did production reach 1784 levels. The principal objection of the Fathers was not to the price which the governor had set, but primarily to the requisitions for grain which was sorely needed by the missions themselves. Substantiating this, Fray Antonio Paterna wrote to Lasuén from Mission San Luis Obispo:

... here we shall find ourselves as much in need, or even more so, than those at the presidio, for after a little more cultivating all the wheat at the mission will be exhausted. Much of it turned out to be worthless, and what was poor in quality is yielding little.⁵⁷

Lasuén informed the governor that the missionaries had not planted more because according to the Neve *Reglamento*, the pueblos had a prior right to accommodate the needs of the military. Adding to the problem, he said, was the harvest, poor in both quantity and quality.⁵⁸

Governor Fages, disgusted with what he felt to be poor cooperation on the part of the friars, in 1785 and sent his complaints to the Viceroy. In January of 1786 the charges reached Viceroy Mayorga who referred the matter to the Guardian of the College of San Fernando, Fray Juan Sancho. A change had meanwhile taken place in Alta California. Fray Francisco Palóu, who had been acting Father President since the death of Serra, was replaced by Fray Fermín Francisco de Lasuén. Palóu had returned to Mexico in February of 1786 and was ordered by Father Sancho to reply to the charges made by Fages.⁵⁹ Fathers Sancho and Palóu submitted the requested report to the Viceroy. Among other things, Fages had charged that "they (the friars) will not sell the grain and the products of the missions at the prices given in the price list which has been approved by His Majesty."⁶⁰ The Governor also complained that reports on the temporalities and on the products harvested were late and imperfect.

Palóu responded by claiming that Neve's price regulation had never received approval from the King. Further, he claimed, prices ought to be

⁵⁶ State of the California Missions in Palóu's hand, San Carlos, December 31, 1784, SBMA. Compared with State of the California Missions, Fermín Francisco de Lasuén, December 1785, San Carlos, SBMA. Trans. in Kenneally, *The Writings of Lasuén*, II, 394-395.

⁵⁷ Fray Antonio Paterna to Lasuén, San Luis Obispo, May 2, 1786, quoted in Lasuén to Fages, San Carlos, May 12, 1786. Bancroft CC-16. Trans. in *ibid.*, I, 107-109.

⁵⁸ Lasuén to Fages, San Carlos, May 12, 1786. Bancroft CC-16. Trans. in *ibid.*, I, 108.

⁵⁹ Sancho to Lasuén, Mexico, April 1, 1786. SBMA.

⁶⁰ Superior Gobierno, Mexico, Año de 1787. Testimonio de Expediente formado a representación del Señor Gobernador de Monte Rey sobre la resistencia de aquellos Misioneros a la observancia del Reglamento de Sitados y Presidios. AGN. Californias, Vol. 12. This is a part of Expediente formado sobre recíprocas quejas del Gobernador Don Pedro Fages, y Religiosos de aquellas Missions.

ruled by scarcity and should be determined only in consultation with the Father President. As to the Governor's complaint, that he was not adequately informed concerning temporalities and harvests, Palóu dismissed it by saying Fages did not comprehend what power the vice-patronage conferred and consequently he interfered despotically in the administration of the missions.⁶¹ The *Audiencia* of Mexico was confused by the charges and counter-charges which were contradictory. A few recommendations were made and on January 12, 1787 the *expediente* was sent to Commandant General Ugarte y Loyola with instructions to make further investigations and to find a solution to the dispute.⁶²

Ugarte y Loyola, in turn, wrote to Father Lasuén requesting a full report on the points in dispute. Lasuén's response, although in agreement with Palóu, provides much more detail. As to the temporalities, Lasuén pointed out, Gálvez had to use "the full force of his authority" to induce the Franciscans to undertake the economic administration of the missions in the first place. The missionaries were doing their best to fulfill their obligation to their neophyte charges and personal greed and private interest did not taint them.⁶³

Lasuén claimed that he knew of no missionary who refused to abide by the price regulation. Prior to the fixing of prices, the missionaries did not dare raise their prices. Some persons in need removed grain almost forcibly when they felt that dire circumstances demanded it. In continuation, he said:

The prices set for grain, in the price schedule referred to, are, in my view (subject always to superior judgement), at the lowest point to which they can decline in time of abundance. On the other hand, we have had years of scarcity; and in them, although the schedule makes provision for it, we did not raise the prices, and neither did we fail to provide for those at the presidio, and for the settlers who needed help.⁶⁴

Finally, Lasuén observed, that the market for grain, goods and produce was more "free, more useful, and more adapted to the needs of everyone" at the missions and he informed the Commandant General that purchasers would confirm that this was so. As a corollary to the disagreement over prices the Father President said the system of measures agreed upon in the *Echeveste Reglamento* deprived the missions of a fair profit on grain. The missions were required to use the same measure for wheat as for corn. Ex-governor Neve had observed that a measure which contained a heaped

⁶¹ *Ibid.* The vice patronage was the control which the Spanish Crown and, by delegation, the secular authority in California exercised over the Catholic Church in its dominions by virtue of the Papal Bull *Inter Cetera* called the Bull of Demarcation of May 9, 1493.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Lasuén to Ugarte, San Carlos, October 20, 1787, SBMA. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, I, 159-171.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

fanega of corn was found to hold one and a half fanegas when filled with wheat. After many verbal and written protestations to Fages they had agreed that some sort of agreement was essential. Lasuén requested that Ugarte impose a solution which would determine the extent to which one measure exceeded another and the measurement which should apply to each kind of grain.

In Lasuén's report a conflict which was to be long lived first came to the surface. The policy put forth by ex-governor Neve of encouraging civilian pueblos to furnish supplies for the military promised to put an end to the monopoly which the missions had so far enjoyed. Lasuén claimed that

... if it is maintained that the pueblos rather than the missions are to get preference in supplying the presidios with grain, the missions will have no means of acquiring what is necessary for survival, nor will they have even the means to clothe the Indians, as our Lord, the King desires.⁶⁵

Several other problems which plagued the economic relationship between mission and presidio were also outlined. When the presidial supply officers made purchases of supplies from the missions they frequently made payment in goods which were of little or no use to the Indians. While the missions had a monopoly of produce, the military had a monopoly of manufactured goods, hence, the missions had to accept whatever form of payment the military chose to make. Payment in drafts or currency occasioned much delay since they could only be redeemed in Mexico. In addition, such payments suffered depreciation in value because of the freight charge from Mexico to San Blas which in the past had amounted to eleven reales per arroba, but in 1786 it had risen to eighteen. Since the moderate prices which were set for mission goods were comparable to those in Mexico, so should prices of goods at the presidial stores be at Mexico City prices. The Indian was being treated unjustly in all transactions. If he was paid in goods, they were often of no use to him and if he was paid in drafts or currency they were depreciated by freight charges.⁶⁶

The complaints which the missionaries made against Felipe de Neve's regulation of prices did not receive swift satisfaction. Instead there was a gradual movement towards greater flexibility in pricing of mission goods. While price lists were never abandoned during the colonial period, provisions were made for price adjustment according to quality and quantities available. As in the past, these important economic decisions were ultimately the responsibility of the governor although he frequently consulted the missionaries. It was for this reason Governor Fages was concerned over

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

the exactness and completeness of mission reports on inventories, plantings and harvests.

The pressure for a flexible price schedule was not new. As early as 1786, Fray Francisco Palóu had written to the Viceroy, Conde de Gálvez, recommending that the price list be revised annually by the governor in consultation with the Father President based on records of harvests.⁶⁷ Although this procedure was not immediately put into practice, it was gradually accepted. A movement in this direction began in July of 1787 when Fages wrote to Lasuén requesting information on crops as soon as it could be made available to him.⁶⁸ He had in mind a new price list which would conform to the economic realities existing in California. Three days later Lasuén responded by assuring Fages that he would give him "news of the crops of the mission" as soon as he received the information.⁶⁹

In possession of the necessary information, Fages made public his revision of the Neve regulation on January 2, 1788.⁷⁰ Although no loud protests were forthcoming, the missionaries must have been somewhat chagrined. It was obvious to all, including the governor, that the agricultural depression of the mid 1780's was over. Fages took advantage of increasing supplies to decrease prices. It must have been assumed that in times of scarcity prices would be increased. Prices of many items, including bulls, cows, oxen, hogs, tallow and beans were lowered in recognition of their increasing abundance. Chickens and barley, for which the demand was high despite increased production, were raised in price. Some items, such as corn and wheat were stable in price.

In a later letter of instructions to his successor, José Antonio Romeu, Governor Fages put further light upon the system of price regulation. He said:

The tariff schedule which was established for the products of the country by the deceased Señor Don Felipe de Neve, makes it clear that the prices of items can only be increased or decreased by the governor according to abundance or scarcity which in general is determined by experience for which purpose they have been approved by His Majesty. The present state of these new establishments has been determined in view of abundance, taking into account the consumers and the harvests as well as the fertility of the livestock, principally of cattle in order to modify somewhat the prices of grains and meats. And when they are favorable they are progressively greater motivation to decrease prices with attention to the increased numbers of said cattle which we now see in the missions.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Fray Francisco Palóu to the Viceroy, Mexico, March 27, 1786, AGN. Californias, Vol. 12.

⁶⁸ Fages to Lasuén, Monterey, July 20, 1787. SBMA.

⁶⁹ Lasuén to Fages, San Carlos, July 23, 1787. SBMA.

⁷⁰ Price list drawn up by Fages, Monterey, January 2, 1788. SBMA.

⁷¹ Fages to Romeu, Monterey, February 26, 1791, AGN. Californias, Vol. 46. Photostat in Coronado Room, University of New Mexico.

A significant difference existed between the regulations of Fages and Neve. Neve had given little consideration to local conditions, but had based most of his prices on Mexico prices and on military salaries. Fages, however, followed a different procedure. His prices were based on local conditions. While the California economy was dependent upon New Spain in many areas, it was fast approaching independence in agricultural and pastoral goods which would serve it well in the second decade of the next century when official economic ties with Mexico were severed. Had it not been so, the economic survival of Alta California would have hung in the balance.

Fages' revised price list was still in effect when Governor José Joaquín Arrillaga recommended a few changes in 1802.⁷² In 1803 the pricing system which the missionaries preferred was put into effect. In that year Viceroy Felix Berenguer de Marquina decided that prices in California should be allowed to fluctuate according to quantities produced, the number of consumers and the volume of trade from Mexico.⁷³ Arrillaga was ordered to form a new price list in consultation with presidial commanders. Although this procedure provided greater flexibility, the missionaries resisted since they had no input in the decision making process. The missions were regarded by the government primarily as suppliers of the military and economic decisions had as their primary concern the well-being of the military. The military, in the final analysis, secured Spain's grip upon Alta California.

Generally the Father Presidency of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén was a period of peace and prosperity for the Alta California missions. Lasuén was a man for his time and presented a dramatic contrast with Serra the pioneer. The basic functioning and the promise of future prosperity had been defined by Serra. Lasuén, more conciliatory and compromising than his predecessor, carefully nurtured the missions to the success envisaged by Serra.⁷⁴ This was not accomplished without some conflict. Disagreements began with Fages in the 1780's and continued unabated throughout Lasuén's leadership. In fact, the problem continued until it became an academic argument after the Hidalgo Revolt of 1810. After that date the missions scarcely hoped that supplies for the military would receive payment either in goods, of which the military had none, or in drafts on the Mexican Treasury, which had no funds.

⁷² José Joaquín Arrillaga to the Viceroy, Loreto, March 24, 1802. AGN. Californias, Vol. 48 (2). Cited in Mosk, "Price-Fixing in Spanish California," 118-22.

⁷³ Viceroy's order to Arrillaga, Mexico, March 25, 1803. AGN. Californias, Vol. 48 (2). *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Biographies have been written on Serra and Lasuén, the two great presidents of the California missions. See the monumental work by Geiger, *The Life and Times of Junípero Serra*, and Guest, *Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*.

A dispute which was in part over the economy and pricing and which shook the foundations of the mission system began to rear its head at the end of the eighteenth century. On July 25, 1797, Mission San Miguel was founded and Fathers Buenaventura Sitjar and Antonio de la Concepción Horra were assigned to it. Horra, who was to be the source of the problem, went astray from the start. Only four weeks later Lasuén reported to Governor Don Diego de Borica that Horra "has become insane, or has given evidence that he is suffering from a very grave nervous breakdown, and so far from promoting the good of that undertaking, he is destroying it."⁷⁵ Lasuén requested that the wayward Father embark as soon as it was possible aboard the frigate "Concepción" for Mexico. He was moved to Monterey where after consulting with two surgeons, Governor Borica pronounced him insane and shipped him off to Mexico. This was not to be the end of the matter. When in Mexico, Father Horra addressed a secret memorial to the Viceroy making a series of wild accusations against the California missionaries. Father Horra's charges were forwarded to Governor Borica with orders for him to make an investigation. The Governor formed a series of fifteen questions pertinent to the charges and sent them to the four presidio commanders for a reply. The replies were sent to the Viceroy who forwarded them to Miguel Lull, the Father Guardian of the College of San Fernando.⁷⁶ Lull communicated the substance of the charges to Lasuén.⁷⁷ Later he sent the fifteen questions and the reply of Commandant Felipe de Goycochea of Santa Barbara saying that the others agreed with it in substance. Lasuén called upon Father Gregorio Fernández of Mission La Purísima Concepción and Fathers Estevan Tapis and Juan Cortes of Santa Barbara to refute Goycochea.⁷⁸ With these reports submitted to him, Lasuén took seven months to prepare his reply to the charges which amounted to a catharsis of suppressed complaints and an eloquent defense of the mission system.⁷⁹

One of the fifteen questions which Governor Borica submitted to the presidial commandants was, "Do the missionaries in the sales made of mission seeds, grain, fat, hides, blankets, and other effects, conform to the price lists?" Felipe Goycochea at the presidio of Santa Barbara replied

⁷⁵ Lasuén to Don Diego de Borica, Santa Barbara, August 19, 1797, DHM, ser. 1, Vol. 1. In Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, II, 41-42. The "Concepción" was one of two ships sent from New Spain in the spring of 1797 to guard the California coast. It was anchored at Monterey. See William Heath Davis, *Seventy-five Years in California*, San Francisco, 1929, 397-408.

⁷⁶ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries of California*, II, 567-568.

⁷⁷ Miguel Lull to Lasuén, Mexico, February 6, 1800, SBMA.

⁷⁸ This was logical since Missions Purísima and Santa Barbara were in the district of the Santa Barbara presidio. Cortes and Tapis to Lasuén in hand of Tapis, Santa Barbara, October 30, 1800, SBMA.

⁷⁹ Lasuén's Refutation of Charges to Fray Miguel Lull, San Carlos, June 19, 1801, SBMA. Trans. in Kenneally, *The Writings of Lasuén*, II, 194-234.

that in his opinion the missionaries submitted to the price list only when it was in their interest. Father Tapis replied from Mission Santa Barbara admitting that in a few cases the tariff was contravened but that in general they adhered to it scrupulously. The two instances in which the price list was not observed were in the sale of wool and of hides. In the official price list, tanned hides were valued at 2 pesos, 2 reales, but Mission Santa Barbara sold them for 2 pesos, 6 reales.⁸⁰ Tapis explained that the mission was not anxious to sell hides at all because more profit could be made by using them for such items as saddles and sacks.⁸¹ For this reason, he claimed, neither soldiers who tanned hides nor the missions conformed to the stipulated price. Two more reasons were given. The cost of producing tanned hides was increased by the scarcity and distance of adequate supplies of water and bark.⁸² The mission also had to pay the corporal of the mission guard 150 pesos per year to supervise the manufacturing process, thus adding to expenses.

Wool was the other instance in which the mission ignored the official price.⁸³ Tapis dismissed this as being insignificant since wool was scarce and had seldom been sold by the missions. However, the mission was not alone at fault in this instance. In 1800 the frigate "Concepción" had brought twenty-two or twenty-three sacks of wool for sale and no one was willing to purchase the shipment. Mission Santa Barbara had offered to take it at the official price, but Commandant Goycochea, who was in charge of it, refused to sell the wool at that price. He obviously hoped to hold out for a better one.

Tapis went on to defend the mission by pointing out that goods were often sold at prices lower than those prescribed. Wheat had been listed at 2 pesos per fanega, but Governor Borica had raised it to 3 pesos. Nevertheless in July of 1799, it had been discovered when the crops were brought in that there was a surplus. Recognizing this, the mission sold nineteen fanegas of wheat to the presidio at 2 pesos, 5 reales per fanega. In 1800 wheat was sold at 2 pesos, 2 reales. Corn, when there was any to spare, was sold at the stipulated price. The mission sold no heifers at any price and none were requested because Goycochea had them on his own rancho. Only fully-grown cattle were sold for meat and fat. The price was

⁸⁰ Cortes and Tapis to Lasuén in hand of Tapis, Santa Barbara, October 30, 1800, SBMA. In Neve's original tariff hides were listed at 2 pesos, 4 reales, but this was reduced to 2 pesos, 2 reales by Fages in 1788.

⁸¹ Neither saddles nor sacks appear in Neve's list. Fages set a price of 12-16 pesos on a saddle and made no mention of sacks. The sacks may very well have been the *botas* in which the missions shipped tallow to Mexico.

⁸² The bark needed in the tanning process was the bark of the Tanbark Oak which was used to produce tannin. See Patricia M. Bauer, "The Beginnings of Tanning in California," *CHSQ*, Vol. 23, 1953.

⁸³ Tapis does not say at what price the mission was selling wool but Fages priced wool in 1788 at 1 peso, two reales to 2 pesos per arroba, depending on quality.

6 pesos, but when cattle had become more numerous, the price was lowered to 5 pesos.⁸⁴ The mission sold blankets for 1 peso, 1 real while the Commandant who made blankets on his own looms, sold them for 1 peso, 4 reales. Tapis fails to mention that Indian labor was free at the mission, while Goycochea had to pay a daily wage for whatever neophyte labor he used.

In his refutation, Lasuén also addressed himself to the question of cattle prices.⁸⁵ The missions had been accused of being reluctant to sell ordinary cattle since they could get a higher price for choice animals. Lasuén claimed that the opposite was true. The missionaries frequently offered the lower priced cattle for sale, but purchasers refused to accept them. Often purchasers would contract for an ordinary cow and then go and tell the steward that the Father had ordered that they be given a cow or a young bull of the best quality. If this was discovered before the animal was delivered, a higher price was asked. The price of cattle was far too low in any case. Ex-governor Diego de Borica had told Lasuén at San Luis Obispo that in one case of cattle brought from there to the presidio of Monterey there had been a profit to the military of three to four hundred pesos. The military had slaughtered the cattle, kept the meat and sold the hides and tallow for more than they had paid for the cattle. Lieutenant Hermenegildo Sal had made a profit of eighty pesos on a dozen head which he had purchased from Mission Santa Clara. Was it any wonder that the Fathers of Santa Barbara preferred to slaughter their own cattle and to make use of the hides for shoes, saddle-bags, leather jackets, sacks, harnesses and a host of other leather items? Lasuén's conclusive argument was that Father Magin Catalá of Mission Santa Clara had told the soldiers and settlers and had given them proof, that it would have been more profitable for the mission to slaughter the cattle, keep the fat and hides and give them the meat for nothing than to sell them animals on the hoof. Everyone recognized this, but still the missions were required to sell them cattle at the regulation price.⁸⁶

This maneuver was not without precedent. In the past, when Fages had sold cattle from the Royal Ranchos to his soldiers for food, he had claimed that the price did not refer to cows on the hoof, but to butchered beef. Hence, he was able to sell the meat to his troops for 3 pesos and then sell the hides and tallow for 3 pesos more. When soldiers had wanted beef from San Luis Obispo, Fages had insisted that the missionaries sell the cows on the hoof for 3 pesos each, thus denying them the profit which he

⁸⁴ This was evidently the current price for choice cattle for which no price limit was set and hence it was allowed to vary with conditions. The fixed price for an ordinary cow was 4 pesos.

⁸⁵ Lasuén's Refutation of Charges to Fray Miguel Lull, San Carlos, June 19, 1801, SBMA. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, II, 914-234.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

claimed for himself.⁸⁷ Despite all these grievances, said Lasuén, the missions continued to supply cows and bulls to the presidios. In his refutation, Lasuén also included a number of suggestions for improvement of the California economy. One in particular must have struck a responsive cord with all residents of Alta California.

I wish they would examine and pass judgement on the prices at which imported products are sold at the stores, the extra charges on goods coming from Mexico and San Blas which, according to the *Reglamento*, should be available at prices based on purchase first hand (for it is according to that scale, too, that wages are determined....)

Much of the conflict in California was conditioned by the conflicting goals endemic in the Spanish colonial system. The desire to make California self-supporting conflicted with the need to stimulate the California economy. The Crown did supply artisans, salaries and provided inducements to settlers, but at the same time it encouraged the self-sufficiency of the Naval Department of San Blas by imposing freight charges which insured that the standard of living in California would be a low one. In addition it interdicted any trade with outsiders which might have provided an outlet for California's surpluses and thus insured that there would be no exchange currency with which to buy necessities from New Spain.

The *patronato real* also implied that mission and presidio would hold many conflicting goals. It was never clearly stated whether state, secular or sacerdotal, was to enjoy primacy. The results was a constant conflict between presidio and mission over proper spheres of influence. Pricing policy was an example of this. Should prices give the missions a fair return or should they be designed to subsidize the military? Certainly the missionaries saw no reason to subsidize their partners on the frontier. They were there to convert Indians and the military were the responsibility of the Crown. For the missionaries it was a point which could be argued and negotiated. For the military, who spent the best parts of their lives in the King's service, the problem was physical and poignant. Their meagre salaries were inelastic and the price of life's necessities, which had to be purchased from the missions had an acute effect. For them, price regulation was essential for survival. While mercantilism, or an adaptation of it, guided policy emanating from Spain, it is certain that like all men in all ages, the people at lower levels sought to promote their economic survival and beyond that personal prosperity. The conflict over price regulations in Alta California had little to do with theoretical royal policies, but was more concerned with the day to day problems of earning a living.

⁸⁷ Francisco Palóu to the Viceroy, College of San Fernando, Mexico. March 17, 1786, AGN. Californias, Vol. 12.

The Connection with San Blas



THE ADVANCE OF THE NORTHERN FRONTIER of New Spain to Alta California does not lend itself to description in the terms of Frederick Jackson Turner as a slowly advancing line of civilization. Rather the Spanish settlement of California was a great leap northward which was planned and prepared with great care. It was not accomplished by a slow overland advance. Between Alta California and the frontier settlements along the Sonora-Arizona border lay intervening deserts and waste. California was linked to New Spain only by the tenuous supply line extending from the Naval Department of San Blas, located in the modern Mexican state of Nayarit.⁸⁸

For California, San Blas was the only source of supply in the early years and the most significant until 1810 when it was interrupted by the *grito de Dolores* of Father Hidalgo. In 1769, California was a true frontier which lacked those items necessary to sustain a European lifestyle. Consequently those Spaniards and Indian apprentices who carried out the settlement depended upon Mexican goods for survival itself. San Blas was the medium through which goods for the sustenance of California were funneled. Food, clothing, hardware, livestock, seed and in the first years, even laborers had to be imported. It is likely that California would have been abandoned without this link. Bears and nuts did not whet the appetites of the first white Californians. Twice, once in 1770, and again in 1772, abandonment was considered because of the late arrival of the supply ships. The existence of the Department of San Blas was itself a matter of debate. Until the Yuma massacre of 1781, the sea route had to compete with a possible land route for favor. In 1773, Juan Bautista de Anza, an experienced and rugged frontiersman who was presidial captain at Tubac, received viceregal orders to explore a possible land route to California. Together with Fray Francisco Garcés, the eventual Franciscan successor to Eusebio Kino, and thirty men Anza set out for California in 1774. After a trip of close to three months the group arrived at Mission

⁸⁸ See Michael E. Thurman, *The Naval Department of San Blas, 1768-1798*. Also Enrique Cardenas de la Peña, *San Blas de Nayarit*, 2 vols., Mexico, D.F. 1968.

San Gabriel proving the possibility of a land route. Anza led another group to California, including settlers, in 1775.⁸⁹ The Yuma massacre in which Garces and the ex-governor of California, Rivera y Moncada, were killed put an end to plans for supplying the new settlements by land.

The overland supply route had never really been practicable anyway. In April of 1773, Junípero Serra wrote to Viceroy Bucareli to urge upon him the importance of retaining the Port of San Blas as the base for communication with Alta California. In his letter he pointed to the foolishness of a supply route going overland from Baja California or Sonora.⁹⁰ The cornerstone of Serra's argument was the increases in expenses which the land route would entail. As a basis for his argument, Serra called to attention the lack of mules with which to transport supplies. He calculated that the number of mules required to move the necessary food, clothing and equipment would amount to 1,100. In addition, he considered that at least 400 mules would be needed as replacements. Secondly, Serra pointed to the money which the Royal Treasury had expended on the construction of the port facilities and ships. Would that be written off as a wasted investment? Where would the muleteers come from and what would be their cost? Given the type of men who were usually employed on such government projects, Serra feared the type of example they would give to the neophyte Indians. In conclusion, Serra told Bucareli:

It seems to me, as I said in the beginning, that neither materially nor spiritually would the new project mean any progress: viz, the proposal to transport by land provisions and equipment to Monterey and its missions. In fact, the reverse would be the case. It would be a great setback for both. And this without any reference whatever to such inevitable accidents as the fall of many mules, the destruction of their loads, the breaking of vessels, the spilling of liquids, and many other sources of damage⁹¹ as has been my own experience in the journeys I have made by land.

Thus Serra dismissed the only serious challenge to San Blas for the business of supplying New Spain's northwest salient.

Like the entire California project, the Naval Department was the product of the fertile imagination of José de Gálvez. It was integral to a two-part plan for stemming the Russian southward advance and for the settlement of California. In May of 1768, José de Gálvez arrived on the Pacific Coast of New Spain and inspected the coast of Nueva Galicia for possible sites for his port. Eventually he settled upon San Blas and began

⁸⁹ See Herbert E. Bolton, *Anza's California Expeditions*, 5 vols.: Berkeley, 1930. On Anza see Mario Hernández Sánchez-Barba, *Juan Bautista de Anza: Un Hombre de Frontera*, Madrid, 1965.

⁹⁰ Serra to Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa, Mexico, April 22, 1773, SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Junípero Serra*, II, 330-343.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

organizing what was to be a major naval station and supply depot. The base which was to be so integral to the economy of Alta California was begun.⁹² The form which the department was to take was formalized in the course of a council of war which took place at San Blas on May 16, 1768. Among other things, Gálvez recommended that two new packetboats, the "San Carlos" and "El Principe" be used for the maritime phase of the expedition to California.⁹³ These two ships had been constructed on the "Rio Santiago" some twenty-six miles upriver from San Blas. A third ship, the "San José" was also commissioned to carry supplies for the original settlement of California. This packetboat was the first constructed at San Blas and her loss in 1770 with supplies for Alta California was a severe setback for the enterprise.⁹⁴

The inauguration of the supply service for California was personally planned by José de Gálvez. Detailed instructions were given to the officers who were to be in charge of the maritime expedition. These officers included Don Vicente Vila, captain of the "San Carlos," Lieutenant Pedro Fages of the Catalanian Volunteers who was to accompany Vila, Miguel Costansó, an engineer and Don Juan Pérez who commanded the "San Antonio." Each had specific orders covering actions which they were to take and goals which they were to accomplish. The introduction to the orders which Gálvez gave to Vila admirably express the goal of this, the maritime expedition for the settlement of California.⁹⁵

It ought to be considered in the first place that this establishment of the Catholic Religion among numerous heathens submerged in the dark ignorance of paganism and to extend

⁹² Thurman, *The Naval Department of San Blas*, 1767-1798, 53-55. See Herbert I. Priestley, *José de Gálvez, Visitador-General of New Spain*.

⁹³ En el Puerta y nueva Población d Sn Blas, Reyno de Nueva Galicia a la costa del Mar Sur, el dia diez y seis de Mayo de mil setecientos sesenta y ocho, el Yelmo. Sr. Dn. Joseph de Gálvez del Consejo y Camara de S.M. en el Supremo de Indias, Intendente. del Exercito, Visitador Gral. de Tribunales, y Re Hacienda de estas Reynos; y Comisionado con todas las amplisimas facultades del Exmo. Sr. Marques de Croix, Virrey, Governor. y Capitan Gral. de esta Nueve Espana, hizo combacar a su alojamiento de las casas Rs. al ingeniero Don Miguel Costansó, al Comandante de la Marina, y de este Puerto Dn Manuel Rivero Cordero, a Dn Antonio Faveau de Quesada, Profesor de matematicas, y Practico en la navegacion de estas Mares, y los de las Filipinas, y a Don Vicente Vila, Piloto de la Rl. Armada de S.M. del Mar del Norte, y destinado como piloto mayor de las Embarcaciones que navegan en estas del Sur, facimile in Enrique Cárdenas de la Peña, *San Blas de Nayarit*, II, 203-209.

⁹⁴ For a discussion of early shipbuilding at San Blas, see Michael E. Thurman, "Establishment of the Department of San Blas and its Initial Naval Fleet, 1767-1770," *HAHR*, Vol. 43, 1963.

⁹⁵ Patentes e Ynstrucciones dadas a los Empleados de la Expedición maritima de Monterey. By Gálvez, December 6, 1768, Puerto de la Paz, AGI. Guadalajara, 416. Ynstrucción, que ha de observar Don Vicente Vila. By Gálvez, January 5, 1769, Puerto de la Paz, AGI, 416. Ynstrucción, que ha de observar el theniente de Yfanteria Don Pedro Fages. By Gálvez, Puerto de la Paz, January 5, 1769, AGI, 416. Ynstrucción que ha de observar el Ingeniero Delineado Don Miguel Costansó. By Gálvez, Puerto de la Paz, January 5, 1769, AGI, 416. Ynstrucción, que ha de observar puntualmente Don Juan Pérez. By Gálvez, Cabo de San Lucas, February 12, 1769, AGI, 416. Transcript in SBMA.

the domination of our King and to protect that Peninsula from the possible ambitions of a foreign nation. . . .

Operation California had both land and sea phases with the burden of provisioning Alta California falling to the maritime expeditions. On May 24, 1768, José de Gálvez set sail from San Blas for Lower California which was to be the base for the "Sacred Expedition." He had left orders to the commandant of San Blas that as soon as the "San Carlos" and "San Antonio" arrived he was to repair them if he judged it necessary and they should be provisioned and loaded with everything necessary for the expedition.⁹⁶ Gálvez himself did not reach Lower California in the sloop "Sinaloa" until July 6, because of contrary winds.⁹⁷ He made his headquarters at the now non-existent Santa Ana and began to assemble supplies for both the land and sea expeditions. Provisions for the "San Carlos" and "San Antonio" were gathered at La Paz and Cape San Lucas. In keeping with his policy of increasing and conserving the Royal Treasury, he had determined that the missions of Lower California should allocate whatever surpluses they could spare for Alta California. In addition, he ordered that a number of wild cattle in the southern portion of the peninsula be slaughtered and the beef jerked.⁹⁸

In December of 1769 the "San Carlos" arrived at La Paz from San Blas with damaged rigging and shipping water.⁹⁹ Obviously the ship was in no condition for the voyage to San Diego. Gálvez, observing caution, ordered the "San Carlos" to be unloaded, examined the keel and decided to have it repaired and careened. Because the necessary tar was not available, Gálvez improvised by extracting a similar substance from a cactus called *pitayo*. In the words of Palóu "the Visitor General on his part, helped in preparing all necessary things, working in person as if he were a common laborer."¹⁰⁰ When repairs had been completed, the ship was reloaded with the supplies she had carried from San Blas and the items gathered at La Paz. Gálvez, claiming he was a better sacristan than Father Serra, personally stowed vestments, sacred vessels and other furnishings destined for church and sacristy of the three new missions soon to be founded. Gálvez ordered:

. . . there should be packed and shipped all kinds of articles for use in dwelling quarters and field, with necessary implements of iron for working the land and planting, and every type of seed from both Spain and New Spain. Nor did he forget even the smallest things,

⁹⁶ Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, II, 7.

⁹⁷ Gálvez set sail from San Blas in May, but was driven to the Tres Marias islands and back to Mazatlán. This was a continual plague to ships attempting to cross the Gulf of California.

⁹⁸ Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, I, 46.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, II, 12.

¹⁰⁰ Maynard Geiger, *Palóu's Life of Junípero Serra*, Washington, 1960. 54-55.

such as seeds for vegetables, flowers, and flax, because, as he saw it, that land should be fully fertile for it was in the same latitude as Spain.¹⁰¹

It was determined that the "San Carlos" should sail on January 9, 1769. On that day all who were to sail with the expedition went to hear mass and listen to a moving farewell speech from Gálvez. Following this, they weighed anchor and sailed for Cape San Lucas for their final departure for Alta California.¹⁰²

The second ship selected for the expedition was the "San Antonio" or "El Principe," which was unable to make port at La Paz because of contrary winds. Consequently she landed at Cape San Lucas and Gálvez departed on January 9th for the cape to oversee preparations for the voyage. It was necessary to carry out the same repair work which had been done on the "San Carlos." When the repairs had been completed to Gálvez's satisfaction he ordered it to be reloaded with the provisions from San Blas and with grains, meat and fish which had been gathered in Lower California. With the appropriate prayers, mass and an address from Gálvez, the ship made way on February 15th.¹⁰³ On the 20th of February, Gálvez notified Palóu who was now Father President of the Lower California missions that the "San Antonio" had sailed "with even more provisions than the "San Carlos." He told Palóu that his heart had gone with the expedition even though he could not.¹⁰⁴

The first product of the San Blas shipyard, the "San José," was now ordered to prepare for the voyage to Alta California. Gálvez ordered the ship to meet him at Cape San Lucas where he discovered that, although it had just been built, it was already leaking. Of this Gálvez wrote Palóu, "now I am working on the 'San Joseph', so that it may carry me from La Paz to Loreto, and then to Sonora, where my last measures are to be taken."¹⁰⁵ The plan was that Gálvez should go with the ship to the bay of Santa Barbara of the pueblo of Santa Cruz on the Sonora coast. On May 1st the ship was christened at Loreto from whence with Gálvez aboard, she proceeded to the port of Santa Cruz. Gálvez presided over the loading of the ship there with corn, beans and chickpeas. In June the "San José" was back at Loreto where she was loaded with four hundred arrobas of jerked beef, some preserved fish, fifty arrobas of figs and raisins, two jars of brandy and eight of wine. Her cargo was completed with some coarse clothing with which to attract Indians, three steeple bells and some

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Monterey is about 37° latitude and Seville a little above 37°.

¹⁰² Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, II, 13-14.

¹⁰³ Geiger, *Palóu's Life of Serra*, 57.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph de Gálvez to Fray Francisco Palóu, Cape San Lucas, February 20, 1769, Museo Nacional de Mexico, Documentos Relativos a las Misiones de Californias, Vol. I, Trans. in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, IV, 243-45.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

vestments for the new missions. Thus loaded she sailed for San Diego on June 16th.¹⁰⁶

The ship was supposed to put in at Cape San Lucas to complete her cargo with some church ornaments and vestments. When she failed to appear, it was assumed that she had caught a favorable wind and had made directly for San Diego. After an absence of three months, she dropped anchor in the port of Escondido with foremast broken. When Gálvez received the news, he ordered her cargo to be removed in launches to Cape Lucas and provided that the packet should return to San Blas for the necessary repairs. In the later part of October the "San José" had made way for San Blas and the cargo, with the exception of the maize, had been sent to Cape San Lucas. The maize was to be left behind because a load of newer maize was waiting at San Blas. Repairs were made and the packet took on a load of maize and beans and then proceeded for Cape San Lucas where she arrived in May of 1770. From there she set sail for San Diego and, in the words of Palóu:

... up to the present time, it has not arrived, nor has there been any news of it, nor has any fragment of it been seen on any of the coasts. It is believed that it must have been lost out in the open sea and with it many people, for it carried an extra crew to replace those who had died on the other packets. ... the loss of that bark has been a great setback to the new conquests, and was the cause of the privations from which the expedition suffered.¹⁰⁷

The supplying of the new borderland of California was left to the "San Carlos" and "San Antonio." Gálvez's plan for one ship being permanently stationed at San Diego was forever shelved with the loss of the "San José."¹⁰⁸

Exactly what supplies the "San Carlos" and "San Antonio" loaded before proceeding to Lower California has not come to light. Likewise, no list of goods collected by Gálvez at La Paz and Cape San Lucas seems to exist. However, on January 16, 1769, Gálvez signed inventories of the final cargos of both ships.¹⁰⁹ Although it later became a point of contention between mission and presidio, no distinction was made in the original shipments between goods destined for the new missions and those designated for the military. It was most assuredly informally understood which

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 37. In his *Life of Father Serra*, Palóu states that the "San José" was never heard from again, but it is clarified in his *New California*.

¹⁰⁷ Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, II, 39.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁰⁹ Estado, inventario, Reglamento de Rancho, y Memoria de lo que conduce el Paquebot de S. M. el San Carlos a los Puertos de San Diego y Monterey que llama al Ynforme. By Gálvez, Cabo San Lucas, February 16, 1769, AGI. Guadalajara, 416. Transcript in SBMA. Estado, Ynventario Reglamento de Rancho, y Memorias de la que conduce el Paquebot de S.M. el "Príncipe" (San Antonio) a los Puertos de San Diego, y Monterey. By Gálvez, Cabo San Lucas, February 16, 1769, AGI. Guadalajara, 416. Transcript in SBMA.

provisions were for each. Father Serra was too conscientious to have left such an important issue to chance and there is no evidence of any quarrel over the division of the supplies. Both ships carried a large and varied cargo of church ornaments and vestments so necessary for the establishment of new missions. Most of these items were surpluses from Lower California missions. Included were chalices, statues, crucifixes, missals, carpets, vestments of all sorts and "other various pieces of silver, silk, and cotton cloth."

In the short run, the most crucial part of the cargo was composed of foodstuffs. No separate designation was made for supplies for the voyage as opposed to those for the maintenance of the establishments to be erected. I include here a list of the more significant food supplies.¹¹⁰

TABLE 3

FOODSTUFFS IN EARLY SHIPMENTS TO CALIFORNIA

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Bread | 635 arrobas |
| Flour | 634 arrobas |
| Maize | 339 arrobas |
| Salted meat | 304 arrobas |
| Dried fish | 95 arrobas |
| Chick peas | 144 arrobas |
| Lard | 39 arrobas |
| Rice | 72 arrobas |
| Lentils | 62 arrobas |
| Beans | 65 arrobas |
| Chocolate | 41 arrobas |
| <i>Panocha</i> (raw sugar) ¹¹¹ | 108 arrobas |
| Cheese | 37 arrobas |
| Chile | 25 arrobas |

These items constituted the main diet of the sea expeditions and early settlements. They were not the only edible goods on board. Betraying the Spanish sweet tooth, candy was included in stores. Smaller quantities of goods, such as hams, olive oil, sugar, dates, figs, raisins, garlic and other spices were carried. Brandy and wine provided traditional Spanish drinks. Although the bulk of the livestock was herded north from Lower California by the land expeditions, a few animals, including fifty-two chickens

¹¹⁰ These quantities represent totals of goods shipped on both the "San Carlos" and "San Antonio." They were arrived at by adding similar items in the inventories cited above. The figures are rounded off to the nearest standard unit of measure.

¹¹¹ *Panocha* was coarse brown sugar molded into small cakes in wooden molds. It was not put through any clarification process. *Panocha* was given different names in different parts of Spanish America. See Hubert H. Bancroft, *California Pastoral*, Vol. 24 of *Bancroft's Works*, San Francisco, 1888. 364-365.

and six head of cattle were crowded aboard the ships, perhaps as provisions during the voyage. Eleven *tercios* of tobacco and thirty-eight arrobas of soap were provided for the pleasure and cleanliness of the pioneers.¹¹²

Materials for clothing, cultivation, building and metal working were prominent in the shipments. Those which were most important for the success of the colonization effort are listed here.¹¹³

TABLE 4
SUPPLIES IN EARLY SHIPMENTS TO CALIFORNIA

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Iron | 30 <i>quintales</i> |
| Nails..... | 6 arrobas |
| Wick..... | 16 <i>libras</i> |
| Ropes..... | 96 pieces |
| Glue..... | 4 <i>libras</i> |
| Wire..... | 6 rolls |
| Shoes..... | 4 doz. pair |
| Seeds, legumes, vegetables, and flowers for planting..... | 2 chests |
| Rice for planting..... | 3 fanegas |
| Wheat for planting..... | 3 fanegas |
| Millet for planting..... | 3 fanegas |

Tools essential for construction and cultivating were: hammers, axes, adzes, chisels, augers, pickaxes, saws, blacksmith's tongs, two iron forges with tools, shovels, hoes, wedges, spades, and plow tips. Kitchen utensils included pots, pans, pitchers, hand mills, spoons and a brass sausage stuffer. Locks, padlocks, scales, weights, hinges and shackles for miscreants were necessary hardware. The list could go on and on unnecessarily.

A variety of cloth and the scissors, thimbles, thread and needles necessary for making clothing were among these first shipments to Alta California. Both wax and tallow candles were sent. Wax candles were generally used for religious services while tallow candles were for daily household use. Along with them were candlesticks and snuffers. Writing utensils, such as ink and paper, were essential.

A few of the more prominent members of both the land and sea expeditions were allowed to send personal shipments. At Cape San Lucas

¹¹² Gálvez lists "100 *tercios* of flour of 541 arrobas." This gives a *tercio* of approximately 5.41 arrobas or 135.25 pounds when an arroba equals 25 pounds. See Estado, inventario, Reglamento de Rancho, y Memoria de lo que conduce el Paquebot de S.M. el "San Carlos" a los Puertos de San Diego, y Monterey que llama al Ynforme. By Gálvez, Cabo San Lucas, February 16, 1769, AGI. Guadalajara, 416. Transcript in SBMA.

¹¹³ A *quintal* was a Spanish hundredweight equal to approximately 101.5 pounds or 100 *libras*. A *libra* equaled approximately 1.015 pounds.

the "San Antonio" took on a small cargo for Pedro Fages comprised of items such as figs, wine and brandy. Serra stowed on the same ship: brandy, wine, a gilt edged chest and various religious ornaments. This appears to be the only situation in which goods were marked with a special designation.¹¹⁴

As with most colonization attempts, the first few years of California's existence was a period of supply shortages and uncertainty over the future prospects of the province. Bucareli's proclamation of August 16, 1770, in which he made a public pronouncement of the occupation of Alta California could very well have been premature.¹¹⁵ Among the serious problems was the uncertainty of the supply service which was in part hampered by the difficulty of the voyage from San Blas to Alta California. The experience of the "San Carlos" in its first voyage is indicative of the hazards encountered. The ship did not reach San Diego until April 29, 1769, 110 days out from La Paz, having been driven 200 leagues out from the coast, she had run short of water because of which she made a stop for water on Cedros Island. Because of the unexpected length of the voyage, incredible hardships had decimated the crew. The engineer, Don Miguel Costansó, who was aboard the "San Carlos" described the suffering.

... but its crew, and the troops it transported whose hardships in so protracted and painful a voyage and in the rawest of the winter, could not fail to be excessive. ... arrived in a deplorable state. The scurvy had infected all without exception; in such sort that on entering San Diego, already two men had died of the said sickness; most of the seamen, and half of the troops, found themselves prostrate in their beds; only four marines remained on their feet, and attended. ... aided by the troops ... to trimming and furling the sails and other working of the ship.¹¹⁶

The pinch of supply shortages was felt immediately, exacerbated by the loss of the "San José." The situation was so critical that there was talk of abandonment. The "San Antonio" had been dispatched from San Diego to recruit more men for the decimated crew of the "San Carlos" and to bring food supplies for all. As the winter of 1769-70 passed and spring made its appearance, hopes began to dim and the return to Mexico was faced as real possibility. Up to February 11, 1770 fifty men had died and food was becoming very scarce. On January 28th Governor Portolá

¹¹⁴ Statement by Juan Gutiérrez concerning goods shipped on the "San Antonio" at Cape San Lucas, destined for Fages and Serra. Loreto, October 13, 1769, AGN. Marina Vol. 31a. Photograph in SBMA. Don Juan Gutiérrez was acting governor of Lower California. See Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, I, 94.

¹¹⁵ Bolton's *Palóu's New California*, II, 301-306. Bucareli's proclamation is reprinted by Palóu.

¹¹⁶ Charles Lummis, ed., "Diary of Miguel Costansó," *Land of Sunshine*, Vol. 4, 486-494, Vol. 15, 38-48, 1901.

calculated that the quantity of maize and flour on hand would last the sixty-eight remaining members of the expedition twelve and one-half weeks. In consequence, he determined March 20th as the day upon which the enterprise would be abandoned if no help arrived. In the deepening gloom Rivera y Moncada was dispatched to Velicatá on February 11th to bring north the cattle gathered there. Meanwhile, prayers were said and a lookout was kept for the timely return of the "San Antonio."¹¹⁷ Supplies were indeed scarce. Fages reported in early February that food stores consisted of thirty fanegas of good maize, twenty-nine fanegas of poor maize, forty-seven sacks of flour, a *tercio* of lentils, a *tercio* of chickpeas and ten arrobas of *panocha*.¹¹⁸ Miguel Costansó commented upon his return to San Diego from his expedition in search of Monterey, that "there were in San Diego provisions of maize, flour and seeds for the maintenance of those who composed the garrison for some months."¹¹⁹

The "San Antonio," having left San Diego in July of 1769, brought news of scarcity to Mexico. Gálvez, ever solicitous, saw that it was quickly loaded and provisioned for the return voyage. Cargo was picked up at San Blas and a stop was made at Cape San Lucas. The "San Antonio's" captain, Don Juan Pérez had orders to sail directly for Monterey, but he learned from Indians of the Santa Barbara channel that the land expedition to Monterey had already returned to San Diego. Pérez retraced his route, reaching San Diego on the afternoon of March 19th. On the 24th of March, well loaded with provisions, the ship dropped anchor at San Diego. California was saved!¹²⁰

The ship dispelled thoughts of abandonment. She carried maize, flour, beans, peas and smaller quantities of other foodstuffs in addition to a variety of medicines. The stock of mission tools also increased. There were adzes, saws, picks, crowbars, hatchets, axes and other utensils.¹²¹ While California went through several more periods of scarcity, abandonment was never again considered as an imminent possibility. Although the arrival of the "San Antonio" must have relieved one of the most anxious periods in Father Serra's life, he relayed it to his lifetime friend, Father Palóu, in one terse statement:

Since the "San Antonio", also called "El Principe", arrived at this port on the Feast of the Saint Joseph . . . it did not enter port til four days later . . . the officers in command have decided on a second trip to Monterey.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Portolá to the Viceroy, San Diego, February 11, 1770, AGN. Californias. Velicatá was the northernmost of the Baja California missions and hence the staging point for land expeditions to Alta California. Rivera y Moncada took a company of twenty-two men south with him.

¹¹⁸ Fages to Gálvez, San Diego, February 8, 1770, AGN. Californias, 66.

¹¹⁹ Lummis, "Diary of Miguel Costansó."

¹²⁰ Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, II, 276-77.

¹²¹ Fages to Serra, Monterey, July 30, 1770, AGN. Californias, 66.

¹²² Serra to Palóu, San Diego, April 16, 1770 in Geiger, *Palóu's Life of Fray Junípero Serra*, 90-91.

In 1771, as in 1770, only the "San Antonio" made a solitary trek from San Blas to Alta California with stops at San Diego and Monterey. While conditions were not as dire as they had been the previous year, she still must have been a welcome sight representing, as she did, the only contact with friends, relatives and civilization. The "San Antonio" carried supplies for the extant missions, in addition to what was necessary for the founding of missions which were in the planning stages. The 1,000 pesos allowed for the foundation of each mission had been turned over to the syndic of the College of San Fernando, Joseph González Calderón. He had purchased and shipped supplies for the founding of five missions. The "San Antonio" also carried ten missionaries who were to staff the new establishments. It can be assumed that provisions for the future missions of San Francisco, Santa Clara, San Luis Obispo and San Antonio were deposited at Monterey while those for San Gabriel were stored at San Diego.¹²³ Serra, at San Carlos, also received the previous year's supplies for that mission which had been deposited at San Diego in 1770. In 1771, the "San Antonio" transferred these supplies to San Carlos on her voyage north.¹²⁴ This began the use of the supply vessels for local coastal transfers of goods. This function became more significant as Alta California began to produce products which stimulated the development of a local market.

On June 20, 1771, Serra signed an inventory of those goods which had been supplied by the "San Antonio."¹²⁵ It included clothing, tools and non-edible items for the two missions of San Carlos and San Diego, plus the six missions in the planning stages. Also listed were food supplies for San Carlos and the proposed missions, but none for San Diego. Since a memorial of goods sent to San Diego exists, San Diego obviously received foodstuffs.¹²⁶ Those items specifically for San Diego were especially marked and significantly include almost exclusively foodstuffs. The explanation seems to be that tools, clothing and other non-perishable items were shipped without a specific destination necessitating that distribution be made by Fages and Serra, while foodstuffs for San Diego were specially

¹²³ Serra to Francisco Carlos de Croix, Monterey, June 18, 1771, AGN. Californias, 66. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 196-209. Serra speaks of eight missions having been supplied. He includes Mission San Buenaventura which was to be established in the near future. Supplies had been brought for its founding by the San Antonio in 1770.

¹²⁴ Serra to Fray Rafael Verger, Monterey, June 20, 1771, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra, Trans. *Ibid.*, II, 211-225.

¹²⁵ Memoria de lo que he recibido juntamente con los demas padres, destinados ministros de estas nuevas misiones, de los efectos y utiles venidos en el pacabot San Antonio, por mano de Señor Theniente Comandante de este Real Presidio de Monte-Rey, Don Pedro Fages, para la erección y mantención de las ocho Misiones de esta parte septentrional de la California, fundadas, y a fundar. Appended to Serra to Verger, Monterey, June 20, 1771, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Transcript in SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, I, 211-235.

¹²⁶ Memorial of goods sent to California for Mission San Diego and Serra, Mexico, 1770-71, AGN. Woodward transcript in SBMA.

shipped for that mission and, hence, their receipt must have been acknowledged by the Fathers assigned to that mission.

The shipment of 1771 added significantly to the stock of tools which would enable the missions to increase and expand their economic functions. These included forty-eight iron tipped plows, forty axes, thirty-two spades, forty-eight chisels, thirty-six augers, eight crowbars, eight turner's lathes, eight saws and eight adzes. Thirty-two iron moulds of various kinds, four for each mission, were also received indicating that the missions were hoping to make some of their own utensils and tools.

Kitchen utensils sent from New Spain evidenced a hope for a growing number of neophyte converts. Sixteen cauldrons, sixteen cookers and eight tin kettles were hardly necessary to feed the missionaries. Seven grinders for the processing of corn were gratefully received. Processed foodstuffs included table oil, hams, biscuits and sugar. The trade in tallow was in favor of San Blas with two hogsheds being sent. Conspicuous by its absence was meat which was sorely missed by Serra and his companions. He begged the viceroy that this oversight should not be made in the future.

May I also ask your Excellency to issue orders that the boat should never sail again, as it did this year, without bringing a supply of meat for our poor men, so that they may work with greater energy and contentment.¹²⁷

The really crucial part of the cargo, essential for the survival of colonization which as of 1771 was not firmly planted, was foodstuffs. Not only was it necessary for simple existence, but also for success. The missions had to have food to attract Indians. Only with food could they hope to fulfill their role as christianizers and purveyors of Hispanic civilization. The following represent totals of staple agricultural products.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Corn..... | 230 fanegas |
| Flour..... | 72 tercios |
| Rice..... | 9 tercios |
| Beans..... | 18 tercios |
| Chickpeas..... | 9 tercios |
| Lentils..... | 4 tercios |
| Wheat..... | 8 tercios of seed wheat |
| Barley..... | 4 tercios of seed barley ¹²⁸ |

¹²⁷ Serra to Francisco Carlos de Croix, Monterey, June 18, 1771, AGN. Californias, 66. Transcript in SBMA. Trans in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, I, 196-209.

¹²⁸ These figures are totals computed from Memoria de lo que he Recivido juntamente con los demas padres, destinadas ministros de estas nuevas misiones, de los efectos y utiles venidos en el pacabot San Antonio, por mano de Señor Theniente Comandante de este Real Presidio de Monterey, Don Pedro Fages, para la erección y mantención de las ocho Misiones de esta parte septentrional de la California, fundadas, y a fundar. Appended to Serra to Verger, Monterey, June 20, 1771, BNM. Cartas de Junipero Serra. Transcript in SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, I, 221-235. Wheat was rarely shipped in unprocessed form except for seed. Shipping costs were reduced by converting to flour before shipment.

Less significant amounts of pepper, anise, saffron, coriander, cloves and cinnamon gave a welcome lift to meals which, at best, were monotonous. Glass beads were shipped as a necessary item to attract neophytes to the missions.¹²⁹ A wide variety of cloth was noted by Serra and was an integral part of the civilizing process through which the missionaries hoped to guide the Indians. Wine and brandy were gladly accepted both for sacramental purposes and for relief of loneliness and monotony. Chocolate, that native Mexican product which Spaniards happily embraced, was included in this and virtually every other shipment. Livestock was limited to a few small animals since it was difficult to ship them by sea. In 1771 mission stock was augmented by three hens with chicks and two sows with suckling pigs and a boar.

Pedro Fages permitted Serra rations for the ten missionaries who arrived in Alta California, but who for the time being were supernumeraries. These included four hams, two arrobas of ground chocolate, four *tercios* of flour, one *tercio* of rice, and one *tercio* of red beans.

Supplies for the missions at this early date were shipped to the governor and the distribution of them was done cooperatively by the Father President and the governor. Serra, consequently, had to sign a receipt for goods received from Fages. This led to a classic conflict between secular and clerical authority, which was aggravated by the scarcity in early California. The issue reached Viceroy Bucareli when Serra was in Mexico City in the spring of 1773. Serra told Bucareli in his memorial of March 13, 1773 that:

I ask your Excellency that an invoice of everything that is sent by boat to the missions for their upkeep during the following year should be sent also, and it should be separate from what is sent to the Commanding officer of the presidio and the escorts. That was the arrangement for the first year, and it gave no occasion for disagreement. The two following years, the commissary at San Blas sent everything to the officer of the presidio for him to pass on to us, to keep us for a year, whatever he had a notion to give.¹³⁰

Serra found basis for his complaint despite Viceregal order to Fages as early as 1771. The "San Antonio" had brought, in addition to bountiful supplies, a cover letter to Fages advising him that the ship carried merchandise, goods, tools and other items. He entrusted Fages to distribute the provisions proportionately between the presidio and the missionaries. Croix also admonished Fages that in addition, the missionaries were to receive "robes, tools of labor and of carpentry" which were not needed at

¹²⁹ Neophyte is a term used in California to designate recently converted Indians or new Christians. Its meaning expanded to include any mission Indian.

¹³⁰ Serra to Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa, Mexico City, March 12, 1773, AGN. Misiones, 12. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, I, 294-327.

the presidios, but which would serve to provide useful occupations for the Indians.¹³¹

A final solution to the squabbles over shipments had to await the *Echeveste Reglamento* of May, 1773 when the entire supply service was reorganized and improved. The decision that supplies should be marked separately was made by the Royal Council of War and Exchequer in May of 1773. The council stipulated "what is given to the missions and is taken by the barks for their maintenance in the succeeding years, shall go separately marked."¹³²

In the spring of 1771 Serra could not have helped predicting an optimistic future for his beloved missions of Alta California. His exuberance overflowed when he wrote Viceroy Croix in June. He expressed thanks for what he called "splendid and lavish provisions." Everything was, he said, exactly as he had ordered. "You have," Serra continued, "spared no pains or expense to attain the accomplishment of so holy a purpose."¹³³ Despite his optimism, 1772 was to be another year of scarcity. California received no more supplies until August of 1772. Available supplies were strained to the limit by workmen who had come with the "San Antonio" and by the founding of Mission San Antonio in July, followed by San Gabriel in September. The supply shortage was made more acute by the practical failure of crops at all four missions due in part to drought, but primarily to inexperience.¹³⁴

Serra and the viceroy were both guilty of miscalculation. Viceroy Croix had badly underestimated the supplies necessary for the subsistence of California and Serra had mistakenly assumed that another ship was to be sent in 1771. In June Serra expressed doubts to Father Guardian Verger that all of the supplies had been sent. He was becoming worried. "It is hard," he commented, "to convince me that the amount represents an outlay of 1000 pesos for each of them (missions). But I may be going too fast, perhaps the money has not all been spent."¹³⁵

In March of 1772, Fages and Father Crespi left on an expedition to the north from Monterey to explore San Francisco Bay. Serra, meanwhile, received information from San Diego and San Gabriel that they

¹³¹ Francisco Carlos de Croix to Fages, Mexico, November 12, 1770, AGN. Californias, 66. Photostat in SBMA.

¹³² Judgement of the Junta de Guerra y Hacienda, Mexico, May 6, 1773. Certified copy as of May 13, 1773 in SBMA. Trans. in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 37-55.

¹³³ Serra to Francisco Carlos de Croix, Monterey, June 18, 1771, AGN. Californias, 66. Photograph in SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, I, 197-209.

¹³⁴ San Gabriel, for example, planted wheat on lowland which did well until it was flooded with water. San Diego planted wheat in a dry river bed where it was washed away with spring rain.

¹³⁵ Serra to Father Rafael Verger, Monterey, June 20, 1771, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photograph in SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, I, 210-225.

the presidios, but which would serve to provide useful occupations for the Indians.¹³¹

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¹³³ Serra to Francisco Carlos de Croix, Monterey, June 18, 1771, AGN. Californias, 66. Photograph in SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, I, 197-209.

¹³⁴ San Gabriel, for example, planted wheat on lowland which did well until it was flooded with water. San Diego planted wheat in a dry river bed where it was washed away with spring rain.

¹³⁵ Serra to Father Rafael Verger, Monterey, June 20, 1771, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photograph in SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, I, 210-225.

were badly in need of food. Father Francisco Dumetz, missionary at San Diego had gone south intending to return with provisions. On April 4th, Fages and Crespí returned to Monterey. Fages and Serra consulted and a decision was made to send Crespí and an escort to the south with some mules loaded with flour. On April 13, 1772, the small party set out and brought some relief to the southern missions.¹³⁶

In a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul, the presidio of Monterey and the missions of San Antonio and San Carlos were soon feeling the pinch of scarcity. On June 26th Fages wrote the Viceroy saying available provisions would not last more than two months. They had been subsisting primarily, he said, on a few vegetables and some milk. He also informed the Viceroy of the fifteen *tercios* of flour which he had sent to San Diego and San Gabriel.¹³⁷

Serra described the situation to his friend Palóu who was still in Lower California.

Those who are the main supporters of our people are the gentiles. Thanks to them, we live because God so wills it; moreover, we must not forget that the milk from the cows and the vegetables from the garden have been very big factors in keeping these foundations going; but these two sources of food are becoming scarce.¹³⁸

The supply service, he noted, was at the root of the problem. If the advance of California was going to depend upon the arrival of ships from San Blas, it would be many years before anything was accomplished.

A few days earlier, Serra had written Father Verger informing him, because of the scarcity, he had released the provisions for the future Mission San Buenaventura to San Diego and San Gabriel. He feared even those two missions might have to be abandoned if supplies did not arrive in the near future. His plans for the founding of new missions had been abandoned because of shortages.¹³⁹

Fages, realizing starvation was a real possibility, set out with a hunting party to the Cañada de los Osos, some fifty leagues south of Monterey. Fages had in mind a bear hunt which would enable his men to subsist and he planned on sending some meat back to San Carlos and San Antonio. In May he set out with most of the soldiers from Monterey. The party remained in the field for three months, eating bear meat and sending loads of it jerked to the presidio and missions. To supplement their diet they traded with Indians for seeds and nuts of various kinds.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, II, 356.

¹³⁷ Fages to the Viceroy, Monterey, June 26, 1772, AGN. Californias, 66.

¹³⁸ Serra to Father Francisco Palóu, Monterey, August 18, 1772. Geiger, *Palóu's Life of Junípero Serra*, 124-126.

¹³⁹ Serra to Father Rafael Verger, Monterey, August 8, 1772, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, I, 247-263.

¹⁴⁰ Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, II, 356-357. The Cañada de los Osos or Valley of the Bears, is now San Luis Obispo.

Relief arrived. In August of 1772, both the "San Carlos" and "San Antonio" dropped anchor at San Diego. Because of storms, they had not been able to make port at Monterey. Serra was chagrined. "In San Diego," he wrote the Father Guardian, "they have everything while here we are starving." In late August Serra and Fages began the trip south from Monterey to arrange for the overland transportation of supplies to the north.¹⁴¹ The "San Carlos" was unloaded and her cargo was dispatched for the north on mules in September. Although late in the season, Fages allowed the "San Antonio" to go on to Monterey for which he was reprimanded by the Viceroy.¹⁴²

The blame for inadequate supplies for Alta California is not easy to assign. Professor Charles Chapman notes that there were continued problems with the ships themselves.¹⁴³ Communications were evidently poor. Officials in Mexico had no way of knowing exactly what the situation in California was and consequently never knew when to send the supply ships. In addition goods which were sent were often not suited to California's needs. Also there was a general ineptness and mismanagement of San Blas itself.¹⁴⁴

The new viceroy, Antonio Bucareli, took a special interest in the California project and with Serra's suggestions in 1773, the supply service was put on a more substantial basis.¹⁴⁵ While the Eschveste Regulations did not receive Bucareli's final approval until July of 1773, the Viceroy acted expeditiously to improve the supply line. As early as February he notified Fages that he had done everything necessary "so that the supply and provisioning of that peninsula might not fail and so provisions might arrive there at the proper time, well selected and of the best quality." He also admonished Fages to see to their expeditious distribution.¹⁴⁶

Bucareli's statement was premature. The end of 1773 and the first part of 1774 was to be another starving time, albeit the last. Serra was in Mexico. The Lower California missions had been turned over to the Dominicans and Fray Francisco Palóu was acting president of the Alta California Missions. Again, Serra could not foresee the coming scarcity

¹⁴¹ Serra to Verger, Monterey, August 8, 1772, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, I, 247-263.

¹⁴² The Viceroy to Fages, Mexico, December 2, 1772, AGN. Californias, 66.

¹⁴³ Charles Chapman, "The Alta California Supply Ships, 1773-76." *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 19, 1916, 184-194.

¹⁴⁴ Thurman, *The Naval Department of San Blas*, 106. For Bucareli's role in the reorganization of San Blas, see Bernard E. Bobb, *The Viceregency of Antonio María Bucareli in New Spain, 1771-1779*, Austin, 1962.

¹⁴⁵ Serra to Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa, Mexico, April 22, 1773, SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, I, 331-343.

¹⁴⁶ Bucareli to Fages, Mexico, February 17, 1773, AGN. Californias 66. Photograph in SBMA. For further discussion of changes made in the supply system see Chapter One above.

upon his arrival at Tepic. He wrote Palóu to bring more Fathers with him when he evacuated Lower California. Anticipating the objection that this might strain the fragile economy of Alta California, he told Palóu:

My answer is that at present there is food, and that, if well distributed, the Fathers will not run short of food, and I trust to God that, during the time it will take for the next shipment of supplies to arrive . . . well under a year . . . they will not face starvation.¹⁴⁷

Bucareli meanwhile had seen to the provisioning and departure of the "San Carlos" from San Blas for Upper California. He planned on sending a second ship in November, but according to his information, California was already well supplied. Because he felt November was a poor time of year to attempt a voyage to California, and believed California to be adequately supplied, he cancelled the November shipment.¹⁴⁸

The "San Carlos" had meanwhile broken her rudder while crossing to Lower California. It was necessary to unload her at Loreto and send her back to San Blas for repairs. Her cargo of corn and beans was left sitting in a warehouse. Palóu, who was preparing for his departure for Upper California, received word of the tragedy. Anticipating the coming shortages, Palóu hastened his departure. As he passed up the peninsula, he collected all the corn and beans available and loaded them on mules.¹⁴⁹ On August 30, 1773, Palóu arrived at San Diego. Upon his arrival he attempted to gather a mule train to send to Lower California to gather supplies left behind. Twenty-five mules were provided by San Diego and San Carlos, while Fages provided thirty-four. These together with those which had come with Palóu totaled eighty-two pack mules.¹⁵⁰

By November shortages were becoming apparent. Palóu informed the Father Guardian that the Monterey Presidio was depending upon milk for subsistence because of the lack of supplies. He reported Mission San Diego was in great need of food while San Luis Obispo was depending "upon the abundance of seeds which it gets from the land." San Antonio had its corn killed by frost and was also reduced to wild seeds and acorns until the arrival of a ship. San Carlos was in the same situation. Only newly founded San Gabriel gave portent of the huge harvests which it would have in later years by reaping an adequate food supply from its own fields. Palóu closed by observing:

We are all in need of habits, tunics, cloaks, mantles, coats, girdles, underwear and sandals.

¹⁴⁷ Serra to Father Francisco Palóu, Tepic, November 10, 1772. Geiger, *Palóu's Life of Junípero Serra*, 134-135.

¹⁴⁸ Chapman, "The Alta California Supply Ships, 1773-76," 185.

¹⁴⁹ Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, I, 296.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 309.

I hope aid will come for us on the ships, including snuff and chocolate, and all the other things which your Reverence may judge necessary.¹⁵¹

A few days later he reiterated the same problems in a letter to Serra. As in previous times of scarcity it was the Indians who provided food to keep body and soul together by furnishing native foods such as nuts and seeds. He again stressed that all of the establishments were in great need of food.¹⁵² "At this mission of San Carlos," Palóu explained, "for thirty-seven days we were without as much as a crumb of bread or a tortilla. The meals consisted of a gruel made of chickpeas or beans ground to flour with which milk was mixed. In the morning a little coffee took the place of chocolate." When Juan Bautista de Anza arrived at Monterey with his troops from Sonora, there was not a single bar of chocolate to offer him for breakfast, and the diet there had been reduced to milk and herbs, "without bread or any other item of food."¹⁵³

In 1773 Bucareli again did not have accurate knowledge of the state of affairs in California. Palóu understated the extremity of the situation in his letters to Mexico, but particularly in his report on the state of the five missions in December of 1773.¹⁵⁴ While he said supplies were running short, he gave no hint that famine haunted the establishments. The theme of his report was of guarded success rather than possible starvation. Palóu and Bucareli were probably both assuming that the provisions which the damaged "San Carlos" had deposited at Loreto would be forwarded by Governor Felipe Barry to Alta California on muleback.¹⁵⁵ The eighty-two pack mules which Palóu had sent back to Velicatá to fetch a load of supplies were reduced in number when Governor Barry confiscated twenty-three of them which he had loaned from Lower California. The argument was not over foodstuffs, but over personal and church items which belonged to the Franciscans, left behind by Palóu when he turned the missions over to the Dominicans in August. Barry, unsure of their ownership, refused to release them and prevented their removal by confiscating mules. Barry was evidently short of mules and could not have removed all of the provisions left at Loreto. Despite the pleading of Fray

¹⁵¹ Fray Francisco Palóu to Fray Rafael Verger, Mission San Carlos, November 21, 1773. MNM. Documentos Relativos a las Misiones de Californias. II. Trans. in *ibid.*, IV, 310-315.

¹⁵² Fray Francisco Palóu to Fray Junípero Serra, Mission San Carlos, November 26, 1773. MNM. Documentos Relativos a las Misiones de Californias. Trans. in *ibid.*, IV, 219-233.

¹⁵³ Geiger, *Palóu's Life of Junípero Serra*, 145. See also Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 127-128.

¹⁵⁴ The State of the First Five Missions, by Palóu, Mission San Carlos, December 10, 1773. Trans. in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 213-243.

¹⁵⁵ Until Felipe de Neve took up his residence at Monterey in February of 1777, the governor of the Californias resided at Loreto in Lower California. From March of 1770 to March of 1775, Felipe Barry was governor at Loreto while the lieutenant governors, Fages and then Rivera y Moncada resided at Monterey.

Pedro Cambón, the mules were not released.¹⁵⁶ As much corn and beans as possible were gathered in northern Baja California and were dispatched northward on the remaining mules. Palóu explained Barry's actions which were understandable to him only in malevolent terms:

... he dispatched to San Diego the mules that had gone from the presidio and mission, without lending even one of those from California, and the provisions were so short that the share of each mission did not come to five bushels, counting both corn and beans. This succor arrived at San Diego in the middle of December, and the letters bringing the news reached Monterey on the last day of that month.¹⁵⁷

In Mexico, arrangements were being made by Bucareli and Serra for the future of California. Two ships, the new frigate "Santiago" and the packet "San Antonio" were being prepared for the voyage to California. Juan José Echeveste had, under Bucareli's orders, collected supplies in Mexico and forwarded them to San Blas.¹⁵⁸ By January the cargo had been assembled. A cover letter, which was to go with the shipment, informed Fages that he was to receive the provisions and invoice from Don Juan Pérez, who sailed in command of the "Santiago." A receipt was to be returned to Francisco Hijosa, the commissary at San Blas. The "San Antonio," Hijosa informed Fages, contained everything desired, but the "Santiago," since she was to sail for the northwest coast carried only limited supplies for Alta California.¹⁵⁹

Hijosa in a second letter of the same date informed Fages he was to put at Serra's disposition for the California missions, six hundred fanegas of maize, one hundred fifty fanegas of beans, sixty arrobas of meat, ten *cargas* of *panocha*, three barrels of lard, three *tercios* of chickpeas and three *tercios* of lentils. Hijosa closed by pointedly admonishing Fages, "would you send me the corresponding notice."¹⁶⁰ One of Serra's complaints was receiving its answer. The issue of supply distributions had been settled by the *Echeveste Reglamento* and Hijosa was insuring that Serra would have no problem receiving goods which had been clearly consigned to the missions.

¹⁵⁶ Fathers Cambón and Dumetz had been sent by Palóu to Velicata to obtain supplies. Cambón remained at Mission San Fernando Velicatá until September 1774. Palóu entrusted him with guarding the goods of the Franciscans who had turned the missions over to the Dominicans.

¹⁵⁷ Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, II, 339.

¹⁵⁸ Juan José de Echeveste was purchasing agent for the Californias. He assumed this new position in 1770 with the authorization of Viceroy Croix. In the same year he made a voyage to California. See Charles E. Chapman, "Difficulties of Maintaining the Department of San Blas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 19, 1916, 262.

¹⁵⁹ Francisco Hijosa and Josef Faustino Ruiz to the presidio commander of Monterey, San Blas, January 23, 1774, AGN. Historia 61. Photograph in SBMA. Hijosa was commissary from 1774-1779 and 1785-1797. Josef Faustino Ruiz was internal paymaster or *Contador interno* after 1769.

¹⁶⁰ Francisco Hijosa and Josef Faustino Ruiz to the presidio commander of Monterey, San Blas, January 23, 1774, AGN. Historia 61.

Serra, in Mexico City, prevailed upon the Christian spirit of Bucareli to present the missionaries with alms, in addition to regular supplies, with which to increase the Indian population. The alms included three boxes of vestments for San Gabriel, San Antonio and San Luis, in addition to five bales of common clothing for the Indians. A quantity of foodstuffs was also provided: olive oil, hams, chocolate, peppers, wine, brandy, two hundred and sixty packages of fine flour of six arrobas each, nine hundred bushels of maize, two hundred fifty bushels of beans, one hundred arrobas of jerked beef, sixteen boxes of *panocha*, three barrels of lard, nine packages of chickpeas, nine packages of lentils, six packages of rice. To prevent dishonesty, each of the five missions received a standard set of measures of six pieces. Bucareli also provided a choice forge of thirty-four pieces along with five quintals, three arrobas of sheet iron. It was hoped that with the help of these alms the missions would be able to sustain themselves with the annual stipends alone.¹⁶¹ In response to Serra's request, these items were marked in a separate invoice to prevent a quarrel with Fages.

In September of 1773, Serra set out on the road from Mexico City to San Blas on the first leg of his journey back to Alta California. Serra was delayed at San Blas because preparation of the "Santiago" for the voyage continued into January of 1774. The Father President gave orders for all goods bound for Monterey to be loaded aboard the "Santiago" which was going to that port while those for San Diego were to be stowed on the "San Antonio."¹⁶² That same fall Palóu wrote to the Father Guardian at the College of San Fernando suggesting that at least one of the vessels ought to go up to Monterey. He was making this recommendation, he said, "so if it seems advisable, you may speak to his Excellency on this point, bearing in mind that the sailors easily find excuses for not coming, even though they leave San Blas with orders to come to Monterey." When this happened it was as if no help at all had come for the northern missions, "since as soon as the rains begin the roads become impassable until April or May, and, moreover because there are no mules for the journey."¹⁶³

In Tepic, on January 14th, Serra signed for an additional consignment of goods which had been purchased for the missions in Guadalajara by the lay syndic, Don Ignacio Estrada. The supplies were mainly cloth and miscellaneous items. The only food item was thirty loads of flour at twelve pesos each. The total purchase, including settlement of some old debts of

¹⁶¹ Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 122-123.

¹⁶² Geiger, *Palóu's Life of Junípero Serra*, 143.

¹⁶³ Fray Francisco Palóu to Fray Rafael Verger, Mission San Carlos, November 26, 1773, MNM. Documentos Relativos a las Misiones de Californias. Trans. in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, IV, 316-318.

Lower California missions, amounted to 1,500 pesos.¹⁶⁴ Of this sum, 800 pesos were in settlement of old accounts incurred by the Franciscans when they administered the Baja California missions and were, according to Serra, not to be charged against the new establishments.¹⁶⁵

Finally Serra sailed from San Blas on January 24, 1774 aboard the "Santiago." Aboard ship were the provisions for the northern missions and a part of the alms granted by the Viceroy. The ship made port at San Diego on March 13th. While the stop was unscheduled, it was fortunate because, by it the shortages at San Diego and San Gabriel received immediate relief. These missions were now able to await the arrival of the "San Antonio" without fear of starvation. The "Santiago" went on to Monterey while Serra made the trek overland. The ship arrived on May 9th and Serra two days later.¹⁶⁶ The voyage of the "San Antonio" was also successful. She had left San Blas on March 21st, having been delayed by repairs necessary for the large cargo which she was to carry. The ship held extra supplies for the "Santiago" in addition to supplies for the presidios and missions. The "San Antonio" reached Monterey on June 8th, three days before the "Santiago" sailed.¹⁶⁷ A few days later, the "San Antonio" sailed southward to unload supplies at San Diego. There must have been great jubilation with the arrival of supplies throughout the small California establishments. Palóu says, when Serra "found himself without the earlier difficulties, with an abundance of foodstuffs and clothing, he cast his net among the pagans, inviting them to the mission."¹⁶⁸

Although participants in the drama were probably unaware of it, 1774 marked the end of the first chapter of Spanish settlement in California. While problems continued to plague the precarious supply service, it ceased to be a matter of life and death for the establishments of Alta California. Serra brought not only supplies, but also the assurance that the fate of California was important to the King and his Viceroy and that their needs were being recognized. Serra expressed the new mood admirably when he wrote Bucareli's secretary, Melchor de Peramas, that

I will not omit giving you an idea of how happy and delighted all the inhabitants feel . . .

¹⁶⁴ Lista de mercadería con su costo, recibida a favor de las Misiones de California. Lista completada en Guadalajara, en 30 de Noviembre y en 15 de Diciembre de 1773. Formado en Tepic (Mexico), por el P. Serra, a 14 de Enero de 1774, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photograph in SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 14-17.

¹⁶⁵ Serra to Father Guardian, Tepic, January 16, 1774, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photograph SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, II, 18-23.

¹⁶⁶ Palóu says the Santiago put into San Diego because of a "chance accident." No explanation is offered. See Geiger, *Palóu's Life of Serra*, 144. On June 11, 1774 the frigate left Monterey for her voyage to the northwest coast. She arrived at the highest latitude on July 20, 1774, just a little below 55°, and returned on August 27.

¹⁶⁷ Chapman, "The Alta California Supply Ships, 1773-76," 190.

¹⁶⁸ Geiger, *Palóu's Life of Serra*, 157.

and we also . . . at the sight of such an abundance of provisions and the very fitting regulations which were so sorely needed. By means of them, our Most Excellent Lord has injected new life into all this country.¹⁶⁹

With the unloading of the "Santiago" at Monterey, the storehouse overflowed. A heap of more than two hundred fanegas had to be piled in the middle of the presidio yard. The ration, which in past times had been one almud for eight days, was increased to two almuds for seven days. This was a far cry from the one-half almud for eight days to which the ration had been reduced in the year preceeding the arrival of supplies. In addition, other food items, such as meat and beans, were now available. Even though three cauldrons of *pozole* were filled and emptied each day, the Indian neophytes still had room for the heaps of tortillas which their godfathers at the presidios sent to the mission each day.¹⁷⁰

The new attitude of attention and concern was not the only factor which was to distinguish past years from those which were to follow. Although it will be treated more extensively later, it is pertinent to mention at this point the increasing ability of the missions to feed themselves. Experimentation with its attendant failure and eventual success was giving valuable knowledge to the missionaries who gradually developed a primitive, but effective, system of agriculture. It was this which lessened dependence upon New Spain and insured that basic survival would never again be an issue. Serra was aware of this as early as 1774. What saved the two southern missions of San Diego and San Gabriel, he said, was the corn harvest at mission San Gabriel which amounted to one hundred ten fanegas of corn. With this the missions and their escorts had been able to feed themselves. San Gabriel, is of course, the extreme example. The other missions did not do nearly as well.¹⁷¹ Even so, Serra's mood was one of jubilation as he anticipated the harvests which were in the fields. "There are," he commented, "many indications which point to the fact that God's blessings, as is evident, have been showered upon us in plentiful abundance."¹⁷² The bounty which now belonged to the missions as a result of improving harvests and adequate supply service were enabling the

¹⁶⁹ Serra to Melchor de Peramas, Monterey, June 14, 1774. Original. The University of Texas at Austin, Stephens Collection. Photograph SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 64-67.

¹⁷⁰ Serra to Father Guardian, Monterey, June 14, 1774, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photograph SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, II, 68-75. *Pozole* was a vegetable stew composed of wheat, maize, peas and beans. It was customary for the military to sponsor Indians at their baptisms and, hence become godfathers.

¹⁷¹ Serra to Father Guardian, March 31, 1774, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photograph in SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, II, 38-47.

¹⁷² Serra to Father Guardian, Monterey, July 18, 1774, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photograph SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, II, 94-119.

missions to achieve their primary function. Gentiles were drawing near from all directions.

Despite Serra's elation at seeing the condition of the maturing missions, he was still not entirely satisfied with the supply service. It was too much for supplies to be shipped to and stored at San Blas a year in advance of their shipment. In the first place, he warned, how could it possibly be determined what supplies would be needed in California a year in advance? The wine would certainly be spoiled and the rats probably would have ruined grain supplies. What about woolen goods? What would their condition be after a year of storage in a humid region infested with rats and insects?¹⁷³ Certainly a better procedure could have been devised. It was incredible to Serra that by the time the "San Antonio" departed from San Blas in the spring of 1774, the supplies for the following year were already stored at the port.

As the agricultural outlook of the missions improved, officials in Mexico City obviously hoped the pressure on the Royal Treasury would be relieved. It was thought that the firmly established missions would be able to bear a larger share of the burden incumbent upon the establishment of new missions. Not only were government expenditures on the missions increasing, but in addition, increased demands were stretching the San Blas facility to its limit. Two supply vessels, the "San Antonio" and the "San Carlos" were scheduled to make voyages in 1775. The two ships left San Blas in early February. The "San Antonio", because of severe storms, took seventy days to make port at San Diego, while the "San Carlos", loaded with provisions for Monterey, ran aground in the port of San Blas itself. Not until March 16th did the "San Carlos" sail in consort with the "Santiago" and "Sonora" which were to continue explorations of the northwest coast.

Charles Chapman claims the effect of deficient cargo capacity between San Blas and Alta California was not felt until 1776, but evidence suggests it was having its effect as early as 1775.¹⁷⁴ In his *Representación* to the viceroy in March of 1773, Serra explained that some pious persons at Tepic, Compostela and surrounding areas had promised to supply him with some alms of corn with which to relieve the privations which plagued the missionary effort in Alta California.¹⁷⁵ In the summer of 1775, Serra now back in California, was still awaiting the corn. Marcos Moreno Calderón wrote he was unable to ship the four hundred fanegas of corn because the commissary Hijosa would not accept it. His report was

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Charles Chapman, "The Alta California Supply Ships, 1773-76," 191.

¹⁷⁵ Serra to Viceroy Bucareli, Mexico, March 13, 1773. Trans. in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 6-7.

substantiated by the Syndic, Miguel Marín de Valle, who wrote that his son-in-law, Marcos, couldn't include the grain because of Hijosa.¹⁷⁶

In October of 1775, Serra wrote a long complaining letter to Father Guardian Francisco Pangua in which he pointed to the long delay in the corn shipment and cited the inadequacy of the supply service.¹⁷⁷ The donation of money with which the corn had been purchased had come from Don Mathias Vadillo of Jalapan. Calderón had agreed to take the two hundred peso donation and deposit an amount of corn of equivalent value at San Blas. Calderón himself had paid the peso per load freight charge from Tepic to San Blas. This had been approved by the viceroy.

When Serra arrived at San Blas from Mexico City, he had found the "Santiago" fully loaded with supplies for missions and presidios. The cargo included 1,500 fanegas of corn, of which 600 were for the missions. In addition, there were 150 fanegas of beans, flour and a variety of other foods. Serra had capitulated, saying, "I saw that to insist they should take on board the corn given by Don Marcos would be to displace some of what His Excellency wanted to give us." Don Marcos had asked the commissary to include the shipment, but had written Serra explaining that the supplies being sent for the missions were excessive and he was recommending to the Viceroy that they be reduced. Otherwise, the commissary continued, there would be room in the ships for only what was going to the missions. Finally, under order from the Father Guardian, Hijosa had been induced to include the grain in the shipment of 1775.¹⁷⁸

While Hijosa was urging the necessity of reducing shipments for the missions, Serra was pushing the Viceroy in the opposite direction. The founding of new missions was entitled to the same consideration in supplies as the older ones had.¹⁷⁹ For the first two or three years each new mission should be provided from Mexico enough supplies to suffice for the missionaries and as many Christian Indians as Serra saw fit to provide. It was of no use to raise the annual stipend for each mission by one hundred pesos, as the Echeveste Regulation had done, when the missionaries had no way of converting it into corn or any other foodstuffs. Serra then dropped the impossible problem on Bucareli for solution. Referring to Hijosa's letter, Serra quoted him as saying mission supplies "were piling up to such

¹⁷⁶ Miguel Marín de Valle to Serra, Tepic, January 20, 1775, AGN. Colección de Documentos para la Historia de Mexico. Segunda serie, Vol. I. Photograph SBMA. Calderón was the son-in-law of the Syndic, Miguel Marín de Valle. He had been delegated the chore of gathering and preparing the alms for shipment from San Blas.

¹⁷⁷ Serra to Father Francisco Pangua, Monterey, October 17, 1775, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photograph SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 340-347.

¹⁷⁸ Hijosa to Serra, San Blas, March 12, 1775, AGN. Colección de Documentos para la Historia de Mexico. Segunda Serie, Vol. I. Photograph in SBMA.

¹⁷⁹ Serra to Viceroy Bucareli, Monterey, July 2, 1775. Original, University of Texas at Austin. Stephens Collection. Photograph SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 262-269.

a degree as to force him to write to your Excellency to have them cut down. Otherwise they could not all be put on board ship." In conclusion, Serra said he hoped:

Your Excellency will take the necessary steps to provide the necessary provisions for the new missions, until the time when their own harvests will help to maintain them.¹⁸⁰

Despite Hijosa's protestations, Serra, zealous in defense of his missions, attributed what he considered a dearth of supplies to the malice of the Commissary. The "Santiago", he maintained had been sent north carrying twenty-five launch loads of stone for ballast where there could have been grain. Then Hijosa had the nerve to write to Serra telling him that the goods at San Blas were deteriorating.¹⁸¹ An eye-witness at San Blas, Fray Miguel de la Campa, confirmed Serra's complaint. Hijosa had shown him the quantity of goods waiting shipment to the missions commenting that there was no room but as de la Campa said, the ship was almost empty.¹⁸²

Serra's view, it would seem, was provincial while Bucareli had the interests of empire on his mind. At any rate, as Serra seemed to sense, Hijosa at San Blas, was not responsible for the problem. The "Santiago" was in no way engaged in a routine supply trip to Monterey. Its voyage was a follow-up to the unsatisfactory voyage of the same ship in the previous year under Juan Pérez.¹⁸³ The "Santiago" was equipped by Bucareli and was ordered to survey the coast to 65 degrees while the schooner "Sonora" was to accompany her. Simultaneously, the "San Antonio" and "San Carlos" undertook to bring the annual provisions to California. The "Santiago," although she carried some provisions, had no intention of stopping at Monterey until she had completed her exploratory voyage. Bucareli had left very imprecise instructions that the "Santiago" might carry some of the provisions for California if there was room for them. Indeed, there was room. In addition to corn for the presidio of Monterey, she carried all of the supplies for the northern missions of San Carlos, San Antonio and San Luis Obispo. She also carried provisions

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ Serra to Father Francisco Pangua, Monterey, October 17, 1775, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photograph in SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, II, 340-347.

¹⁸² Fray Miguel de la Campa to Father Francisco Pangua, Tepic, December 15, 1775, MNM. Documentos Relativos a las Misiones de Californias. Vol. 2. Fray Miguel de la Campa Cos supervised the transfer of the Lower California missions to the Dominicans in 1773. In 1775 Father Campa Cos was aboard the "Santiago" as chaplain of the Heceta expedition to the northwest. He then returned to the College of San Fernando.

¹⁸³ For details on the Pérez voyage of 1774 see Donald C. Cutter, ed., *The California Coast*, Norman, Okla., 1969. Included in this work are the diaries of Fray Tomás de la Peña and Fray Juan Crespi who accompanied the expedition. Also see "El piloto don Juan Pérez da cuenta de los sucesos de su expedición y acompaña el diario," November 3, 1774 in Cardenas de la Peña, *San Blas de Nayarit*, II, 48.

and supplies to sustain her crew of ninety-eight for one year.¹⁸⁴ After a voyage lasting in excess of five months, the frigate dropped anchor in Monterey harbor on August 29th and two days later unloaded her provisions.¹⁸⁵ Bucareli was making the best of a poor situation. For the time, the exploratory voyages were being given first priority in Spain where rumors of Russian movements put an end to Spanish lethargy. At the same time the Viceroy was expected to maintain the California settlement. It would have been foolish to encumber the frigate by overloading her with supplies while at the same time endangering the provisions by sending them on a voyage upon which more than the usual risks were incumbent.

Serra, although he could complain that the friars' robes were torn, chocolate supplies were low, or stocks of snuff were disappearing, could no longer claim anyone was in danger of starvation. In the same letter to Bucareli in which he voiced complaints about the supply service, he also pointed with pride to growing mission harvests and was especially proud of the "sacks after sacks of greens, cabbages, lettuces, turnips, etc." with which he had been able to supply the crew of the "San Carlos" after its arrival at Monterey on June 27th, 1775.¹⁸⁶ Serra went on extolling recent harvests.

And all of this . . . quantities never heard of before . . . as far as harvests are concerned in these parts . . . together with the abundant provisions sent by your Excellency, have given us the reputation and the manner of life of rich people who live in abundance; and our poor neophytes have eaten and still eat without stint. . . .

The arrival of the packet boat "San Carlos" at this port was the first time it had gained it, also the first time we saw a boat arrive without bringing anything for us. They say our supplies are in the frigate and that it will touch here before the end of its lengthy voyage. In any case we could get along very well without it, if only we had some wine for saying Mass, but we did not get any.¹⁸⁷

Bucareli had balanced the needs of the California establishments for provisions against the success and safety of the voyage of exploration under Bruno de Heceta and had won.

After 1775 complaints against the Naval Department of San Blas emanating from Alta California received a lower key. This is not attributable to an improvement in the supply service, but rather to the growing ability of Alta California to supply herself. The Department continued on the verge of bankruptcy and at times lacked the money to pay employees. Other problems also plagued San Blas. The budget and resources were

¹⁸⁴ Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, IV, 7.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Serra to Viceroy Bucareli, Monterey, July 2, 1775. Original, University of Texas, Austin. Stephens Collection. Photograph in SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 262-269.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

further strained by the demands associated with exploratory voyages to the northwest. Difficulties were compounded when the port began to fill in almost immediately upon the construction of the Department. Consideration was given to moving the port to nearby Chacala or Matanchel, but such action never materialized. Another difficulty arose from a lack of ships to carry on the activities of the Department. As if this was not trouble enough, there was a deficiency of manpower with which to operate the port and shipyard. The site was unhealthful and crews were disorderly. It is a wonder the supply service operated as well as it did, beset as it was by these difficulties. No wonder Serra experienced deficiencies and delays in deliveries of supplies.¹⁸⁸

The role of the San Blas supply service lost some of its crucial impact as early as 1775. Early cargos had been composed almost entirely of foodstuffs, while in later ones the percentage declined. This was due, as was previously pointed out, to the increasing ability of the missions to sustain themselves. The ability of New Spain to sustain this salient was limited both by a pinched treasury and by the limited capacity of the supply service. Expansion of the missions could not have been sustained from New Spain unless vastly greater expenditures had been made on supplies and on the Naval Department. The hunting and gathering economy of the native Californians was not compatible with the missionary enterprise which required a settled, agricultural people. If the natives did not live in large, stable communities, they had to be gathered and resettled so as to conform with Spanish concepts of a Christian lifestyle. In order to feed them, other foodstuffs had to be imported or an agricultural system had to be developed. All missions went through both stages. In the first years outside sustenance was required. After a period of four or five years, varying with the geographical and labor peculiarities of each mission, the point of self-sufficiency and sustained growth was reached. From this point on, except for occasional acts of God, the normal course of events was the production of ever larger agricultural surpluses.

The production of surpluses further relieved the supply service of obligations. Not only did missions sustain themselves and serve as a source of supply for the military, but they were also able to provide foodstuffs for the starving period of newly founded missions. At an early date, California became capable not only of sustaining itself, but of providing for its own growth. In the area of foodstuffs, the supply service was necessary only to provide for the first lean years of the initial missions.

The *memorias* of goods shipped to Mission Santa Barbara from its

¹⁸⁸ See Charles Chapman, "Difficulties of Maintaining the Department of San Blas, 1775-1777." And Thurman, *The Naval Department of San Blas*.

inception on December 4, 1786 provided evidence of the altered character of the San Blas supply service.¹⁸⁹ The first memoria for Mission Santa Barbara was signed by the procurator, Fray Joseph Murguía, on March 23, 1786.¹⁹⁰ This was the first shipment of goods for the new mission. Substantiating what was said earlier, the first shipment included no foodstuffs which were produced by the other missions. Grains of all types, including seeds and livestock, were supplied to Santa Barbara from its sister missions. Some edibles were shipped, but all were luxury items not necessary for life, although it is not certain that Fathers Paterna and Oramas, who founded the mission, would have regarded them in such a light. Included were fine and ordinary chocolate, ground chile, sugar candy, vinegar and oil. That was the extent of foodstuffs provided from New Spain for a newly founded mission. The potential of the limited supply service was optimized by shipping items of less bulk and whose value was increased by their non-availability in California and their high value relative to the effort and space consumed in transporting them. In this fashion, barn, kitchen, workshop and church were equipped with essentials not produced in California. The kitchen was provided with chocolate and water cups, *pozole* spoons and a long list of other items. Church items included altar cloths, baptismal font, wax for candles, censer, candleholders and snuffers. A wide variety of supplies for the various mission industries was sent. Axes, picks, wool cards, many types of cloth, sacks, paint, large quantities of iron, capes, hats, ammunition, and ropes. These items only begin the list, the rest can be left to the imagination. The total shipment was valued at 2,405 pesos and 4 reales. To cover this, the Syndic had provided 1,000 pesos allowed for the founding of a new mission. This left a balance of 1,709 pesos, 4 reales against the mission which would be made up in later years.

There was a general tendency for the value of shipments to increase over the years. This was modified by the missionaries' perception of their own financial situation. Missionaries did not simply order the largest quantity of provisions which they felt could be shipped, but rather they adjusted annual purchases to their available funds. It is not proposed at this point to examine mission finances, but a few words are necessary. Debts to other missions, individuals and balances against the mission for previous years' purchases naturally tended to reduce the amount of the current purchase. The reverse was also true. Credits from sales to presidios, other missions and credit balances left over from previous years increased the amount which the padres felt they could spend. There was an observable tendency to balance the mission account which was kept at

¹⁸⁹ *Memoria* is used here in the sense of financial account.

¹⁹⁰ Memoria de las efectos que contesta fecha Remito para la Misión de Santa Barbara, signed by Fray Joseph Mariano Murguía, College of San Fernando, Mexico, March 23, 1786, SBMA.

TABLE 5

PURCHASE ACCOUNT OF MISSION SANTA BARBARA 1786-1810

| Year | Purchases | Debt or Credit |
|-------|-----------|----------------|
| 1786 | 1,936 | 1,409 |
| 1787* | 1,030 | |
| 1788 | 780 | 1,682 |
| 1789 | 704 | 1,747 |
| 1790 | 543 | 1,480 |
| 1791 | 604 | 1,152 |
| 1792 | 798 | 1,287 |
| 1793 | 2,181 | 1,550 |
| 1794 | 1,164 | 2,725 |
| 1795 | 1,219 | 881 |
| 1796 | 889 | 1,108 |
| 1797 | 913 | 78 |
| 1798 | 1,225 | 999 |
| 1799 | 1,193 | 60 |
| 1800 | 1,184 | 528 |
| 1801 | 1,917 | 713 |
| 1802 | 2,182 | 577 CR. |
| 1803 | 1,725 | 481 |
| 1804 | 2,573 | 75 CR. |
| 1805 | 2,451 | 74 |
| 1806 | 3,325 | 1,389 |
| 1807 | 1,264 | 438 |
| 1808 | 2,153 | 730 |
| 1809 | 2,418 | 975 CR. |
| 1810 | 4,934 | 1,031 CR. |

* No "memoria" is available for this year. This figure was taken from a Factura of goods remitted for Mission Santa Barbara in March of 1787, signed by José de Arvide, Mexico, April 14, 1787, SBMA. Arvide was most probably lay syndic of the College of San Fernando. This is most likely not the total purchase.

the College of San Fernando by the procurator. The following figures are only approximate. Comparison is difficult because there were no standard accounting procedures. The manner in which the annual *memoria* was drawn up depended on the preferences and whims of the current procurator. The *memoria* which was an annual rendering of accounts was inexact and its format varied from year to year. In computing the value of shipment items have been added or subtracted depending on how the accounts were drawn up. When they were included, freight charges were deducted, while loading and packing costs were included. Debts, which are provided for comparison, are totals after all credits have been deducted.¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ Amounts are given to the nearest approximate peso. Credits in favor of the mission are marked "CR". These figures were drawn from "Memoria de los efectos Remitidos a la Mision de Santa Barbara." Drawn up for the years 1786-1810 with the exception of 1787. Originals in SBMA.

Although they did not like to think of themselves as such, it is obvious that the fathers were financial managers of some skill. No mission ever overestimated its eventual ability to pay for supplies. Whereas budgets were not balanced on a yearly basis, in the long run, they were. The relative stability of prices on goods sent from Mexico made their task simpler. Widely fluctuating prices, common in contemporary Latin America, were not a feature of the colonial economy. Prices did vary, but over time no appreciable inflation or deflation is observable. Table 6 lists three items which were included in almost every shipment.¹⁹² While the following chart is admittedly a limited sample, it does indicate the pattern of most prices. The remarkable stability of tobacco prices is due to the tobacco monopoly held by the Crown which was instituted by José de Gálvez in the course of his tour of New Spain. While prices varied, there is no overall trend. The average price for chocolate throughout the entire period listed was ten pesos rounded off to the nearest peso. Likewise, the averages for the decade before and after the turn of the century, when figured separately, also equal ten pesos rounded off to the nearest peso. No discernible price trend is characteristic of the San Blas trade.

Freight charges were another expense borne by the missions which was incurred, not only in shipment from San Blas to Alta California, but also on goods moved from Mexico to Tepic and from there to San Blas. Freightage varied depending on the size of the load and weight of articles shipped. Rates for land transportation varied also depending in each case on the contract made. Typically, Serra paid eighteen reales per arroba for the movement of goods from Mexico City to Tepic in 1773.¹⁹³ Movement from Tepic to San Blas amounted to one peso per load. In 1775, Don Marcos Moreno Calderón paid that amount on a gift of grain for the mission.¹⁹⁴ Serra acknowledged the imposition of legitimate transportation charges for goods moved to San Blas in his official recognition of Joseph González Calderón as Apostolic Syndic. He accorded Calderón permission to receive the annual stipends for the missionaries and to use them "to help in the freight expenses to transport our supplies to San Blas."¹⁹⁵

In early years exceptions were made and freight charges were not

¹⁹² These figures are a composite from "Memoria de los efectos Remitidos a la Mision de Santa Barbara" drawn for the years 1786-1810 with the exception of 1787. Originals in SBMA and Memoria de los efectos Remitidos por Fr. Lorenzo Rebuerta, a la Mision de Santa Cruz, y a sus Ministros los R.R.P.P. Fr. Francisco Gonzáles y Fr. Domingo Caranza, en este año de 1800. Original in SBMA.

¹⁹³ Receipt for Merchandise signed by Serra, Tepic, January 14, 1774, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photostat SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, II, 14-17.

¹⁹⁴ Serra to Father Francisco Pangua, Monterey, October 17, 1775, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photostat in SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, II, 254-257.

¹⁹⁵ Serra to Joseph González Calderón, Monterey, June 5, 1775, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photostat in SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, II, 254-257.

TABLE 6

PRICES OF SELECTED ITEMS REMITTED TO MISSION
SANTA BARBARA

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Chocolate per Arroba</i> | <i>Barrel of Wine</i> | <i>Bundle of Tobacco</i> |
|-------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1786 | 10p 6r | — | — |
| 1787* | — | — | — |
| 1788 | 10p 4r | 31p 4r | 6r |
| 1789 | 9p 6r | 26p | 6r |
| 1790 | 9p 6r | 23p 3r | 6r |
| 1791 | 9p 3r | 24p 2r | — |
| 1792 | 8p 5r | 24p 4r | 6r |
| 1793 | 14p 4r | 28p 4r | 6r |
| 1794 | 9p 1½r | 23p 4r | 6r |
| 1795 | 10p ½r | 28p | 6r |
| 1796 | 10p 2r | 37p 7r | 6r |
| 1797 | 12p 2r | 30p | 6r |
| 1798 | 9p 2r | 43p 7r | 6r |
| 1799 | 8p 3r | 62p 2r | 6r |
| 1800 | 7p | 56p | 6r |
| 1801 | 10p 2r | 50p | 5p ½r |
| 1802 | 5p 3r | 71p 3r | 6r |
| 1803 | 10p 1r | — | 6r |
| 1804 | 10p 5r | 55p | — |
| 1805 | 9p | 34p 1r | 6r |
| 1806 | 13p 6r | 36p | 6r |
| 1807 | 10p ½r | — | — |
| 1808 | 14p | — | — |
| 1809 | 12p 3r | — | — |
| 1810 | 10p ½r | — | 5p 6r |

* No data available. Blanks indicate that item was not shipped in the corresponding year. Figures are close approximations since the unit price in most cases had to be calculated from a shipment of several of the same items.

imposed. The goods which Serra brought with him to California upon his return from Mexico were shipped free of charge.¹⁹⁶ Especially in the case of supplies for the founding of new missions, Serra pressed for exception from shipping fees. In a 1775 memorandum he asked that goods being shipped for new missions be placed on the account of the King. Because, he remarked, "if the freight expenses have to be paid from the thousand pesos, it might be that there would not be enough money, and it might be necessary to cancel some items."¹⁹⁷ Exemption from freight charges was

¹⁹⁶ Serra to Father Guardian and Discretorium, Monterey, July 18, 1774, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photostat in SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, II, 94-119.

¹⁹⁷ Memorandum signed by Serra, Monterey, July 3, 1775, AGN. Californias, Vol. 72. Photostat in SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, II, 278-283.

TABLE 7
COSTS OF CARGO AND FREIGHT ON GOODS SHIPPED
TO SANTA BARBARA AND
SAN DIEGO

| SAN DIEGO | | | SANTA BARBARA** | | |
|-----------|-------------------|---------|-----------------|-------------------|---------|
| Year | Value of Cargo | Freight | Year | Value of Cargo | Freight |
| 1777 | 837p | 119p | 1786 | 1,935p | 469p |
| 1778 | 781p | 132p | 1788 | 780p | 104p |
| 1779 | 777p | 135p | 1789 | 704p | 110p |
| 1780 | 521p | 69p | 1790 | 543p | 71p |
| 1782* | 870p | — | 1791 | 604p | 91p |
| 1783 | 891p | 119p | 1792 | 798p | 122p |
| 1784 | 1,244p | 102p | 1793 | 2,181p | 128p |

* No supplies were received at San Diego in 1781. Lasuén does not give freight charges for 1782.

** In 1786 the freight rate was 2p, 2r per arroba. In subsequent years it was lowered to 1p, 4r.

exceptional and had to have official sanction. On September 28, 1776 Serra received a letter from Viceroy Bucareli in which he was informed of a recent decision of the Department of the Treasury. The decision, signed by the Royal Fiscal, stipulated that the *Real Hacienda* was to meet the expenses of the land and sea transportation of all supplies destined for the new missions which were to be founded in the vicinity of San Francisco. Father Serra assumed that this privilege extended for Missions San Francisco and Santa Clara and was to continue in all future foundations. In June of 1777, he wrote Viceroy Bucareli petitioning that one thousand pesos be released to the syndic for both Mission Purísima and San Juan Capistrano which he desired to found in the near future. The two missions would be well provided for "if the privilege of free transportation continues to be extended to them."¹⁹⁸ Only one other instance of exception from freight charges has been found and it was minor. In 1768, José de Gálvez and Serra agreed that each missionary would be permitted six arrobas per year free of charge. This, presumably, was intended to exempt from impost goods ordered for personal use.¹⁹⁹

Although the distance of the missions from San Blas varied, all were charged the same rate which was calculated using the arroba as a standard. For example, in 1800, both Mission Santa Barbara and Mission Santa Cruz paid one peso, four reales per arroba of supplies. At least by

¹⁹⁸ Serra to Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa, San Diego, October 8, 1776. University of Texas at Austin. Stephen's Collection. Photostat in SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, II, 72-77.

¹⁹⁹ Gálvez, Reglamento acordados y convenidos con el Padre Presidente de los Misiones en 30 de Noviembre de 1768, La Paz, November 30, 1768, AGI. Guadalajara, 418. Photostat in SBMA.

1788 freight rates were standardized and never varied from the one peso, four reales rate. Earlier, however, freight rates varied. In 1786, Mission Santa Barbara paid two pesos, two reales per arroba. The following are typical freight rates.²⁰⁰

Freight rates varied from five percent in 1793 to seventeen percent in 1779 at Mission San Diego. In addition to imposts for transportation, there were varying fees for the loading of provisions.

Mail service was, in most instances, provided via the San Blas supply service. Although not in the category of supplies, the interchange of mail between missionaries and Mexico was crucial for the efficient operation of the missions. Serra, in many ways a financial wizard, was determined to stretch the limited budget of the missions as far as it would go. Consequently, in his representation to the viceroy in March, 1773, he requested the governor stop interfering with the mails and letters from the missionaries to the College of San Fernando be delivered free of charge.²⁰¹ Previously, all mail had been sent to the governor who then made the distribution. The viceroy and the council granted Serra's request. Henceforth, no official was to open mail addressed to missionaries and letters to the college or to missionaries were to be delivered free of charge. The only restriction was that all mail receiving free delivery had to be strictly confined to mission business.²⁰² Private letters were posted by the presidial *Habilitado* and the charge was placed in the mission account at the presidio. Postage was customarily three reales per letter.²⁰³

Officials at various times refused to recognize the franking privilege which had been granted to the missionaries, who themselves were guilty of sending personal letters in their packages. Fages' second term in California from 1782-1791 was a period of conflict over the free mailing privileges granted to the missions. Controversy developed in early 1783. In that year a local postal service was established and Fages attempted to revoke the free postage granted to the missionaries. He justified his actions on the basis of a Royal *Cedula* of 1777 which, in listing those exempted from

²⁰⁰ These figures were derived from "Memoria de los efectos remitidos a la Mision de Santa Barbara" drawn for the years 1786-1810 with the exception of 1787. Originals in SBMA. and Lasuén's Annual Reports for Mission San Diego 1777-1784. Report for 1777 in SBMA. Report for 1778 in AGN. Hacienda Series, Mis. Alta California, Informes. Report for 1779, AGN. Hacienda Series, ser. II, tomo II. Report for 1780, AGN. Hacienda Series, Mis. Alta California, Informes. Report for 1782, AGN. Hacienda Series, Mis. Alta California, Informes. Report for 1783, AGN. Hacienda Series, ser II, tomo II. Report for 1784, AGN. Hacienda Series, Mis. Alta California, Informes. All are trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuen*, II, 333-371.

²⁰¹ Serra's *Representación* to the Viceroy, College of San Fernando, Mexico, March 13, 1773. Trans. in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, II, 37-55.

²⁰² Decision of His Excellency and the Royal Council, Mexico, May 6, 1773. Trans. in *ibid.*, III, 37-55.

²⁰³ For example see, Monterey Presidio account with Mission San Carlos, signed by Hermenegildo Sal, Monterey, December 31, 1799, AASF. Photostat in SBMA. Sal includes three reales "for a letter which I posted."

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²⁰¹ Serra's *Representación* to the Viceroy, College of San Fernando, Mexico, March 13, 1773. Trans. in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, II, 37-55.

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postage, failed to list missionaries. Serra claimed he, as well as all of his brothers, were servants of the King. Furthermore, he threatened, if Fages persisted, the missionaries would neither send nor receive mail, which would deprive the governor of the inventories he was demanding.²⁰⁴ In an obstinate mood, Serra wrote in conclusion:

As to our daily happenings, or if we should die . . . we will send along the news by some open note or other, whenever we find anyone to carry on its way the information for us.²⁰⁵

All of this, after he had been assured by Fages that he could put his mind at rest, since all mail between the missionaries would be considered as official mail.

Serra received two responses to his protest. Hermenegildo Sal, *Habilitado* at Monterey assured the Father President that the eleven reales marked on a packet for which he had to sign a receipt would not be charged to the mission. Sal maintained that all letters, even official ones, had to have their cost marked on them for the Royal Treasury.²⁰⁶ Fages wrote, verifying Sal's statement and assuring Serra no postage would be charged.²⁰⁷ He told Serra, recourse would have to be made to the commandant general for a decision on the question. Serra submitted his report on the missions in July 1784. The problem still had not been resolved.²⁰⁸ Only on the condition that such reports would be postage free had he consented to draw them up and he had received the governor's assurances. However, when the report from San Gabriel reached him, there was a notation of twenty reales on the outside of it, but he assumed, as Sal had told him, that it had reference to other accounts. However, Sal had later sent a bill for twenty pesos, two reales for postage on letters sent to Mission San Carlos. In June, only a few months before his death, Serra wrote the Father Guardian asking him to see the Postmaster General in Mexico and to request to have mail sent between College and missionaries free of postage.²⁰⁹ It was agreed, after Serra's death, that mail was once more to be free of postage. On August 16, 1786, the guardian informed the missionaries that the Royal council had granted free passage of mail between missionaries and the College. However, official mail had to be separately enclosed and directed to the *Contador General de Correos*.²¹⁰

²⁰⁴ Serra to Pedro Fages. Letter unsigned and undelivered. c. 1783, SBMA. And Serra to Pedro Fages, Monterey, February 25, 1783. SBMA.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Sal to Serra, Monterey, March 9, 1783, SBMA.

²⁰⁷ Fages to Serra, Monterey, March 10, 1783, SBMA.

²⁰⁸ Report on the missions, Father Junípero Serra and Father Mathias Antonio Noriega, Monterey, July 1, 1784. SBMA.

²⁰⁹ Serra to Father Juan Sancho, Monterey, June 18, 1784, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, IV, 248-255.

²¹⁰ Palóu to Lasuén, Mexico, July 12, 1786, SBMA.

The missionaries, themselves, were not blameless. The regulations were subverted by inserting personal mail within the specified packages. On July 22, 1791, Father President Lasuén was prompted to remind them of the regulations. The missionaries, in some instances, had failed to enclose and address mail to the Postmaster General or the Administrator of Tax Exemption and, in consequence, had cost the missions eighteen pesos in the last year.²¹¹ Earlier, he had admonished them against trying to sneak private letters along with official mail. He relayed a complaint from the syndic by way of the guardian of the college.

Our Brother Revuelta complains that he has had to face many embarrassments in connection with the mail or the Mexican courier. The reason is that certain letters from here were sent to private individuals outside the college, under cover of the Administrator General, Don Andres de Mendivil. Those who act in that fashion expose all of us to the risk of being deprived of the franking privilege we enjoy, and which is so important to us.²¹²

Lasuén went on to warn all of them not to indulge in such behavior in the future.

While various officials challenged the privilege, it was never revoked. In 1802, Lasuén received letters from Manuel Rodríguez, commandant at San Diego and José Pérez Fernández, in charge at Loreto, questioning the free postage. Lasuén explained that the privilege had been granted sixteen years earlier by a royal council and had been enjoyed in peace since. Authorization had been sent to each presidio and he was sure that if the pair searched they would find it in their possession also. The enjoyment of such a public privilege for a period of sixteen years was proof enough of its legitimacy.²¹³ The issue was settled by a decree of Viceroy Iturrigaray in December, 1803. The Father Guardian had informed him of attempts to charge postage on mail of the missionaries to and from California. The Viceroy replied ordering, in the future all such letters should receive free passage.²¹⁴ No further challenge appears to have been made.

The San Blas trade was effectively ended by the initial insurrection of Mexican independence in 1810. The *grito de Dolores* of Father Hidalgo stimulated no popular excitement in the distant province of California, but the economic dislocations caused by the war in Mexico quickly made themselves felt. The transports of 1810 were the last to arrive. In September of 1811, Father Guardian Garijo's letters announcing the state of

²¹¹ Lasuén to the Missionaries, San Carlos, July 22, 1791, SBMA. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, I, 224-226.

²¹² Lasuén to the Missionaries at Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, and San Francisco. San Carlos, October 22, 1795, SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, I, 357-359.

²¹³ Lasuén to Don Manuel Rodríguez, San Carlos, December 16, 1802, SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, II, 303-304.

²¹⁴ Decree of Viceroy Iturrigaray, Mexico, December 23, 1803. Sent to the College of San Fernando, SBMA.

affairs in New Spain to the missionaries in California arrived. Presumably his letters had come up from Loreto in Baja California. In them was narrated the story of the rapid spread of insurrection across New Spain, the financial prostration of the viceroyalty and the cutting off of exits. The insurgents had captured the frigate "Princesa" on her way back from her California supply voyage, Garijo went on describing conditions and explaining why provisions could not be sent.

We have recovered the port of San Blas and the frigate "Princesa", but it has been impossible to send either the supplies or five or six padres whom I had meant to send this year . . . we must see what his Excellency (the Viceroy) will resolve, for he will necessarily take some step, either through Acapulco or through San Blas . . . I have not sent this letter because of the roads . . . the supplies for this year have not yet left Mexico, nor can the padres be sent while the roads are obstructed.²¹⁵

A communication to the Viceroy by the guardian of the College of San Fernando in 1819 claimed that the provisions collected in 1810 to be sent to the California missions in 1811 were seized for the Mexican troops and were never replaced, although the missions had been charged for them.²¹⁶ Not only was the supply service suffering from direct attack by the revolutionaries, but also the war had so drained the treasury that there were no funds with which to pay drafts which the missions held against the government. In 1812, the missionaries learned provisions for the past year had been lying in San Blas because there was no money in the treasury to pay mission drafts. As of that date the syndic held 14,000 pesos worth of drafts in favor of the missions which had not received payment.²¹⁷

Thus in 1810 the San Blas supply service which had been poorly planned, inefficient and, at best, sporadic ended. Nevertheless, it had been essential for the colonization of California and made the effort possible. Its demise marked the end of annual shipments for the missions and of provisions for the military. By 1810 the missions had become strong economic institutions and were able to fill the void. The missions provisioned themselves and the military with apparent ease and provided exchange surpluses which were used by presidio and mission to trade for those items which California did not produce. The missions did all of this for the military with a fear, which eventually became a reality, that they would never be compensated by the government.

²¹⁵ Garijo to Tapis, Mexico, February 20, 1811, SBMA. Both Acapulco and San Blas had been captured by the insurgents. For a discussion of these movements of the revolutionaries, see Francisco Bulnes, *La Guerra de Independencia*, Mexico DF., 1910. 101-105.

²¹⁶ *Representación* of Fray Baldomero López to the Viceroy, Mexico, January 18, 1819. Contemporary copy in SBMA.

²¹⁷ Fray Pedro Martínez to Fray Vicente Sarría, Mexico, July 17, 1812, SBMA. Martínez was the procurator at the College of San Fernando while Sarría was commissary perfect of the missions.

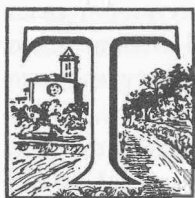
Mission Reports and Accounts



THE ECONOMY OF HISPANIC CALIFORNIA was conducted primarily on a barter basis. Actual cash transactions, if any, were made between officials in Mexico. Both missionaries and military were paid in goods since pesos would have been of little use in California. To have shipped coin to California and then to have shipped it back to New Spain to pay for supplies would have been foolish. Nor did the Indians share in the valuation which the European Spaniards placed upon round pieces of ornamental metal stamped with the King's silhouette. If coins were of any value to them, it was as ornaments. Indians were not attracted to missions by money, but by those items which money could buy. For food and trinkets, which had a utilitarian value to them, they would enter the missions and work at agriculture and industry. Coins were of no more use to the military in Alta California. Cash was of no value where there was nothing to buy. Only gradually, after the beginning of the nineteenth century, did California convert to a money economy, due to the increasing volume of economic activity carried on with outsiders.

Since transactions in Mexico between military, mission, government agencies and private contractors were on a cash basis, accounts in California were based upon the monetary system current in New Spain. Two factors combined to produce extensive, although often inexact, record keeping in California. First there was the Spanish penchant, conditioned by royal absolutism, for multiple record keeping by any institutions even remotely related to government activity. This was compounded for the California missions by the fact that detailed and accurate records had to be kept of debts to them incurred by the military if there was to be any hope of their being honored by officials in Mexico. This was an added burden imposed by the barter economy. To fulfill this need, each mission kept an account book whose character bears more resemblance to a daily diary than to modern account keeping. This, however, was common in an age which barely grasped business principles and saw little need for standardized accounting procedures. There was no double entry system and accounts were infrequently totaled so the exact financial standing of each mission was rarely known.

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These relatively formal account books were kept only for domestic transactions and they were necessary for the collection of debts in Mexico. Accounts were kept in a small leather bound book which sufficed for a five to ten year period, although the gradually increasing economic activity reduced the lifespan of each volume. There seems to have been little systematic procedure in making entries. Each mission had an account with one presidio determined by its proximity, although in exceptional cases accounts were kept with more than one unit. The presidial account, since it involved greater sums of money, was kept with more accuracy and care than others. Two separate accounts were kept within the one. Debts incurred by the presidio to the mission were kept separately from those owed by the mission to the presidio. The modern system of debits and credits was not known. Although these accounts were often inaccurate, errors were ultimately eliminated. It was customary for the presidio to keep a record of transactions with each mission in its district. The accounts were supplementary. For example, goods purchased at a mission for a presidio were recorded twice; once by the missionary and a second time by the presidial *Habilitado*. An account could not be sent to Mexico for collection until it had been certified by both parties.

At the end of each year mission and presidio would total and compare balances in their accounts. One of two things then occurred. If, as was usually the case, the balance favored the mission, the *Habilitado* would give a signed warrant drawn on the *Habilitado General* in Mexico City for the amount. If payment was not made in that year, the balance arrived at by mutual consent was carried forward. Balances against the mission received different treatment. Since stipends were totally expended on goods shipped from San Blas each year, there was no fund at the College of San Fernando upon which missions could draw to cover debts. Debts, as a consequence, were gradually paid in kind. In this instance, although values were kept according to specified prices, the entries amounted to paper bookkeeping, since no cash ever changed hands, either in California or in New Spain. It has been suggested that missions swindled and cheated the military, but it is clear why this was impossible. No false debt could be charged against the military at the mission since when the *Habilitado* and missionary reconciled accounts it would certainly have come to attention and the *Habilitado* would not certify its legitimacy unless further evidence was available.

Missions also kept accounts with individuals, usually military, who made purchases from them. These accounts were, almost without exception, in favor of the missions. As many as a hundred people might be in this category at any mission. Such records were kept in the same book as the presidial accounts with each individual's name on a page with no

apparent arrangement. Entries were scribbled in as the debtor made a purchase and rarely was an account paid in full, often running until the person's death. No running balance was kept. Entries, whether payment or credit, were simply written down and the amounts were entered in a single column. On demand the missionary Father would add and subtract figures to see what was owed. Usually he would then ask the debtor to affix his signature to the account to certify its verity. An account might be totaled each year or maybe not for several years depending only upon whether a balance was requested or not. The Fathers never knew how much was owed the mission by individuals. While on the surface the accounts appear simple, they do contain complex entries due in large part to the shortage of cash. Debts from one person to another were often discharged on paper by using a mission as an intermediary. In a credit transaction with the mission as the lender, one individual would discharge his debt to another by charging it to his mission account. In return, the mission would pay the debt either from small cash resources or in kind. A second manner of satisfying a debt depended on the creditor having a mission account. A payment in cash or kind could simply be made on the creditor's account. The same end was often achieved by a debtor allowing his creditors to make purchases on his mission account. For Alta Californians, the mission thus served as a banking and lending institution and all without interest.

A second type of personal account was kept for members of the presidial garrison. In this sense the mission served as an extension of the presidio store where the soldier purchased supplies and rations. In place of cash, California's soldiers were paid with a credit by the *Habilitado*. Normally the *Habilitado* purchased supplies either in Mexico, in which case they were shipped north from San Blas, or as became increasingly common in the case of food supplies, they were purchased from the missions. The whole procedure was simplified by allowing soldiers to make purchases directly from the missions which would in turn collect payment by receiving a draft on the *Habilitado General* from the presidial *Habilitado*. A similar procedure was followed for members of the mission guard or *escolta*.

Special contracts were also kept in the mission account book with the *majordomo* who supervised the economic activities of the mission, and with artisans employed by them. A typical contract for a *majordomo* was one made with José de Santa Ana Cevila by Mission Santa Barbara on February 16, 1799. Cevila was a soldier assigned to the mission guard at the time, but the Fathers envisioned continued employment after his term of enlistment was up. In return for his services he was given six steers annually, an arroba of tallow monthly, four reales worth of candles

monthly, three almuds of corn and an almud of beans weekly. After his discharge from the military he was to be paid, in addition, twelve pesos monthly. The hiring and duties of *majordomos* will be discussed at length subsequently.²¹⁸ All accounts with individuals were generally in arrears and were poorly recorded. This fact was attested to by the poor Father of Mission La Purísima who attempted to record the assets of the mission in 1818. He ended a long list of debtors with the exclamation, "that is as many debts as I can recall."²¹⁹

Frequently accounts were kept between one mission and possibly several others. Missions which specialized in the production of certain items often made arrangements for mutually beneficial exchange with another mission. Mission La Purísima, for example, frequently sent wheat to Soledad in exchange for leather goods. Accounts between missions might also be juggled at the College of San Fernando in Mexico. In 1807, Mission Purísima received goods from Mission Santa Barbara in the amount of 1,465 pesos. In October, Father Mariano Payeras wrote to the Procurator José Viñals asking him to credit Mission Santa Barbara for that amount.²²⁰ In order to simplify payment, debts and credits were often exchanged in what seem to have been complex arrangements. A mission might pay a debt owed by a presidio to another mission. The presidio's object was to consolidate debts to avoid having to draw up numerous warrants at the end of each year. Because of geographical proximity, the Presidio of Monterey could expect to have a large account with Mission San Carlos. In most years a draft on the *Habilitado General* would be given to the mission to cover the outstanding balance. In 1788, Monterey had a twenty-four peso debt to Mission San Buenaventura which was in the Santa Barbara Presidio district. Mission San Carlos gave the twenty-four pesos to the *Habilitado* at Monterey, who transferred it to the *Habilitado* at Santa Barbara, who credited it to San Buenaventura's account there. The presidio at Monterey had paid its debt to San Buenaventura via the mission's account at Santa Barbara. Monterey now owed the debt to Mission San Carlos.²²¹ Debts were not always discharged in such a convoluted fashion. Frequently a substantial debt was paid directly. In 1806 and 1807 Mission La Purísima, which specialized in leather goods, sent 496 pesos worth of knapsacks, saddle pads, leather jackets and

²¹⁸ Libro de quantas que esta Mision de Santa Barbara tiene con la Habilitación de este presidio de el mismo nombre y otras varios particulares, 1794-1805, SBMA.

²¹⁹ Account Book of Mission Purísima 1806-1834. Transcribed by Lewis G. Thomas and Trans. by Lewis G. Thomas and Elmira Osuna. Berkeley, 1938. Typed copy in SBMA, p. 153.

²²⁰ Payeras to Viñals, Purísima, October 12, 1807, AGN. Historia de Mexico. Primera serie, tomo 2. Phs. SBMA.

²²¹ Accounts of the *Habilitado* of Monterey with Mission San Carlos signed by Joseph Francisco Ortega, December 31, 1788, AASF. Phs. in SBMA.

rainproofs, and pack saddles to the San Francisco Presidio. Because of the size of the debt, the presidio sent a warrant for the amount directly to the Procurator at the College of San Fernando in Mexico.²²² Many of the Alta California missions had similar arrangements with the missions in Baja California and with the Presidio at Loreto. This financial system allowed trade with military or missionary establishments located at substantial distances with surety of payment. In case of default, appeal could be made either to the governor, as head of the military, or to the Father President of the missions. The bookkeeping, however, was often complex and it is no surprise that the *Habilitado's* accounts were often in arrears. It was a lot to expect of men who had no particular training in account keeping.

Trade was often carried on with individuals who lived at some distance from the mission and collection of such accounts was often difficult. Missions would often designate a collector and pay him a commission. Collection was somewhat easier when the party belonged to the military. Many persons in the San Diego Presidio district had accounts at La Purísima. Ensign José Luján owed the mission fifty-four pesos in March of 1809 and the mission considered the chances of recovering what it was owed as slim. In order to recoup at least a portion of what was owed, the missionaries commissioned Joaquín Rodríguez, a soldier, to attempt collection. In return for the amount, either in a warrant from the presidio or in silver, Rodríguez was to receive a ten peso commission.²²³

Other types of accounts which were not significant in terms of amount, but which are an indication of the versatile services provided by missions often appear. An interesting note appears in the Santa Barbara mission accounts of 1803 signed by Father Estevan Tapis. It says:

Señor Gonzáles, retired soldier, delivered to this mission of Santa Barbara in the month of October of the year 1803, 60 head of cattle more or less, with the agreement that the mission has to give him, for as long as he lives, 6 cattle or young bulls each year.²²⁴

This was a form of annuity which guaranteed González that he would at least have fresh meat on his table in his old age.

The presidios and missions compared and verified accounts usually at yearly intervals. After balances were agreed upon, a warrant was drawn up and the general procedure was for the governor to attest to the amounts by affixing his signature. The warrant was then remitted to Mexico directly by military officials or if there was no immediate means of sending

²²² Account Book of Mission Purísima, 1806-1834, pp. 198-199.

²²³ Account Book of Mission Purísima, 1806-1834, p. 203.

²²⁴ Libro de quantas que esta Mision de Santa Barbara tiene con la Habilitación de este presidio de el mismo nombre y otras varios particulares, 1794-1805, SBMA. Señor Gonzáles cannot be identified since his first name is not given. Several soldiers by this name were in California.

it, it was returned to the mission in whose favor it was drawn. Such warrants were usually sent via the supply ships, but frequently the land route down the California peninsula to Loreto and then by sea across the Gulf of California offered more rapid transit. In 1792 Father President Lasuén sent a draft to Governor Arrillaga for his authentication. He further requested that the governor send it to Father Juan Crisostomo Gómez to prevent delay. Lasuén requested Father Crisostomo to forward it to the College of San Fernando.²²⁵ In a streamlined system, only two officials were kept by the College of San Fernando to attend to the financial needs of the missions. These were the Procurator and syndic. The Procurator received drafts and requests for provisions from the missions. This office was usually held by a missionary who had seen some years of service in the missions and the missionaries were consulted about the appointment. The annual shipment to the missions was accompanied by a *memoria* for each establishment. This was not, as has so often been assumed by California historians, simply a bill of lading. It was a complete rendering of the account of the mission concerned as it stood at the College of San Fernando. While mission account books were a record of local economic transactions, the *memoria* recorded the mission's economic status in relation to New Spain. In addition to listing debits to the mission account, involving expenditures for provisions, it also listed credits to the mission's account. It recorded the mission's balance from the previous year, listed drafts collected, settlements of accounts with other missions and arrived at a balance for the year. It is not to be confused with requests for goods sent to Mexico nor with bills of lading. The *memorias* contained information crucial to the future operation of a mission. Without it, the missionaries did not know what warrants had been paid, what debts were satisfied, how much they had spent and consequently would have had no idea of their budget for the following year. After the severing of communications with Mexico in 1810, Father Payeras wrote the Procurator complaining that he had not received a *memoria* and consequently had no way of knowing the financial status of Mission Purísima. "In what way are we to know," he asked, "what we have or the state of our accounts in that capital or in Tepic?" He went on to request of Father Pedro Martínez that he make an effort to send them in duplicate "in order for us to know credits and debts, and warrants which have been paid and those which have not."²²⁶

The first Procurator appointed at the College of San Fernando apparently was a lay brother, Joseph Mariano Murguía, although by 1786 he

²²⁵ Lasuén to Don José Joaquín de Arrillaga, San Carlos, August 2, 1792, AASF. Vol. I, Trans. in Kenneally, *The Writings of Lasuén*, I 253.

²²⁶ Payeras to Father Pedro Martínez, La Purísima, September 3, 1812, AGN. Historia de Mexico. Primera serie, tomo 2. Transcript in SBMA.

may have become a member of the Franciscan order. Serra mentioned a letter which he had written to Murguía in October of 1776, complaining about not receiving supplies ordered. As late as 1786, he still held the office, since in that year he signed the *memoria* for Mission Santa Barbara.²²⁷ From 1788 to 1792 the office was held by Fray Gerónimo Sampelayo, followed by Fray Lorenzo Rebuelta, who was Procurator until 1801. In 1801 the first of the ex-California missionaries, Tomás de la Peña, took over the office. He was replaced in 1806 by José Viñals, who in turn yielded to Fray José Guilez before 1810. Guilez was succeeded by Fray Pedro Martínez in 1812. The functions of the Procurator decreased in significance since drafts were no longer honored, stipends were not paid and annual *memorias* were not shipped after 1810.

The second financial officer of the College of San Fernando was the syndic. This position derived from the Franciscan order which, in strict observance of vows of poverty, refused to allow its members to handle financial transactions. The syndic was a layman who handled the purchase and collection of items ordered for the Alta California missions. He collected drafts either from the Procurator or in some cases they were sent directly to him. The syndic usually made his base of operations at Tepic where he could oversee supply shipments. The syndic was granted power of attorney by the missionaries he was to serve in order that he might be recognized as their legal representative in all business transactions. The document granting power to a syndic suggested by the Guardian was usually drawn up by the Father President and then sent as a circular letter to all missionaries for their signatures. The entire document was then forwarded to the syndic.²²⁸ While, in early years this procedure was observed, in later years it tended to become a formality. In April of 1802 Father Lasuén wrote to Father Guardian José Gasol telling him to expect a letter with the signatures of all the missionaries nominating for the office of syndic that person deemed best fitted for the purpose.²²⁹ The office of syndic was one involving considerable responsibility and trust. At least once the confidence of the College and missionaries was misplaced. In October of 1807 the missionaries were informed that the syndic Estevan Lazcano had died and was being replaced by Eustaquio de la Cuesta.²³⁰

²²⁷ Serra to Father Francisco Pangua, San Diego, October 7, 1776, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Photostat in SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, III, 40-71. Also "Memoria de los efectos remitidos a la Mision de Santa Barbara" drawn for the years 1786-1810 with the exception of 1787. SBMA.

²²⁸ Serra to Joseph González Calderón, Monterey, June 5, 1775, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Phs. in SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, II, 254-257.

²²⁹ Lasuén to Fray José Gasol, Mission San Francisco, April 20, 1802, AGN. Documentos para la Historia de Mexico, ser. 1. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, II, 270-272.

²³⁰ Father José Gasol to Father Estevan Tapis and Missionaries, Mexico, October 4, 1807. Contemporary copy by Peyri in SBMA.

The next year it became evident that Lazcano had misspent mission funds and had died deeply in debt. Father President Estevan Tapis wrote to the missionaries informing them that the missions were being called upon to cover the deficit, each mission according to its age. This was essential, he said, so "that the honor of the missionaries of California should remain clean in the minds of the public of Tepic and San Blas."²³¹

A change was made in the procedure for the collection of warrants drawn by presidios in favor of the missions as of 1816. The California presidios had a general agent in Mexico who performed many of the same functions for the military as the syndic did for the missions. This was the office of *Habilitado General*. Warrants were generally presented to him by agents of the College of San Fernando for collection and he in turn collected the cash from the Royal Treasury. A change was made in 1816. Formerly warrants had been transferred to Mexico City.²³² Drafts in California were now issued to the missions on the treasury at Guadalajara. Although the question was academic at this point since no warrants received payment, it did worry the missionaries. Father José Viader wrote to the Procurator, Fray Norberto Santiago, requesting further information in light of the new situation. Viader had just received a warrant for 2,000 pesos which was drawn and was to be collected in Guadalajara. "Would your Reverence tell me," he asked, "who to remit it to, because I don't know who the syndic is or if one exists."²³³ The Procurator apparently responded that he had attempted to collect warrants at Guadalajara and had found it impossible. He advised Viader to entreat to have the *Habilitado General* moved to Mexico City as before.²³⁴ In retrospect it may be academic, but to Father Viader it was not. Until the end of the Kingdom of New Spain in 1821, the missionaries continued to hold the illusory hope that presidial debts would be paid.

Account books and warrants were kept primarily to facilitate the economic operation of the missions. A second and more general category of reports relating to economic matters were solicited by the government. Increasing royal absolutism and regalism under the Spanish Bourbons combined with an undercurrent of anti-clericalism contributed by the Enlightenment, imposed the requirements upon missions. Reports for Serra's term of presidency up to 1784 lack uniformity and were often haphazard in the information contained. The first and most basic was the required annual certification of the number of missionaries and the place of residence of each. The purpose was to provide the government with

²³¹ Circular Letter, Tapis to the Missionaries, Santa Inés, June 30, 1808, SBMA.

²³² For discussion of the office of *Habilitado General*, see Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 187-189, 421-422.

²³³ José Viader to Norberto Santiago, Santa Clara, February 29, 1816, HL. Stearns, Gaffey, McPherson, Monterey, Vallejo and California File Collection. Xerox copy SBMA.

²³⁴ José Viader to José Viñals, Santa Clara, October 31, 1816. *Ibid.*

accurate knowledge as to the number of missionaries who were eligible to receive the 400 peso annual stipend from the Pious Fund. The stipend was not, it may be recalled, a blanket grant to every missionary in California, but was calculated on the basis of 800 pesos for two Fathers at each mission. Any missionaries in excess of two were supernumeraries and as such were not entitled to a stipend. Apparently the first such certification of residence was required retroactively for the year 1774. Although the *Echeveste Reglamento* required no certification, the timing would indicate that it was a mutual understanding, perhaps as a result of the increase in salary which Echeveste granted. At any rate, Serra responded to the Father Guardian's inquiry in October of 1774 by saying:

As regards certifying to the place of residence of the religious, during the whole of last year, and of this year, in their respective missions, I have been occupied with this matter for eight days; and Father Campa, who is at the presidio, is earnestly helping me.²³⁵

The need for annual reports on the state of the missions had been felt by the government in Mexico as early as 1772. On April 30 of that year the Viceregal Council decreed that the missionaries of both Californias should send annual reports on the state of their missions to the governor who was directed to forward them to the capital from where they would be forwarded to Madrid.²³⁶ No formula was issued for the drawing up of these reports and the result was confusion. Particularly unsatisfactory to Viceroy Bucareli, were the reports sent from Lower California. In February of 1776 Bucareli voiced his complaints to Governor Neve and at the same time provided an exact format to be followed in subsequent reports.²³⁷ The Viceroy described exactly what information was to be included. First, the geographical location of the mission was to be exactly described including latitude. A description was to be made of the church, furnishings and all other buildings along with any notable improvements of the year. Land under cultivation was to be described and increase or decrease in livestock was to be noted. Plantings and resultant harvests were to receive particularly careful attention. A *padrón*, or census, was to be drawn up in such a manner as to show increase or decrease from the previous year and the age, sex and marital status of each person. Bucareli admonished Neve as to the extreme importance of these reports.

In response to the Viceroy's request, Serra drew up a sample formula in September of 1777 and sent it to Mission San Antonio.²³⁸ This formula

²³⁵ Serra to Father Francisco Pangua, Monterey, October 29, 1775, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Phs. in SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 378-397.

²³⁶ Galindo Navarro to the *Comandante General* of California, Arispe, August 23, 1782. Certified copy as of October 11, 1782 in SBMA.

²³⁷ Bucareli to Neve, Mexico, February 19, 1776, SBMA.

²³⁸ Serra to Father Miguel Pieras, Monterey, September 6, 1777, SBMA. This letter was to be forwarded to the other missions. The form covered only the manner in which the *padrón* or census was to be drawn up.

was subsequently adopted by all of the missionary Fathers. The typical information included in each mission report was the name of the mission, geographical location, distance from next mission, names of missionaries in charge, amount of annual stipends, number of baptisms, deaths and marriages from its beginning, as well as annually, number of neophytes at the mission, number of cattle, sheep, goats, horses, mules, swine, number of fanegas of wheat, barley, corn, beans, peas, lentils and garbanzos sown and harvested. The Fathers at each mission were to draw up their reports and submit them to the Father President. From these he was to draw up an abstract or general report and submit it to the Viceroy. A copy was also sent to the College of San Fernando and one was retained.

The statistical information in reports from Serra's period were in prose form, while subsequent ones contained the information in columnar form under the appropriate headings. The first report in this familiar pattern was drawn up by acting Father President Palóu for the year 1784.²³⁹ During the Serra period the general report to the Viceroy was not always drawn up by the Father President. In April of 1776, Serra wrote to Father Guardian Pangua that henceforth he would send the individual mission reports to the College and he hoped that the report would be made there.²⁴⁰ Although this did not become a permanent procedure, the annual report for 1775 was made by the Father Guardian, Francisco Pangua.²⁴¹ Since California was included in the *Provincias Internas* created in 1776 by royal decree, reports were diverted to the *Comandante General* instead of the Viceroy. The creation of the new administrative unit had little practical effect upon California since her base of supply remained in New Spain, but it did occasion some objections by Serra. On August 22, 1778 he informed the *Comandante General* that subsequent reports would be sent to him.²⁴² While official reports were directed to Teodoro de Croix, it is certain that the Viceroy continued to get reports through the College of San Fernando. In 1782 Croix found it necessary to reprimand Serra for his negligence in remitting reports. Serra had not, Croix claimed, turned in any reports on the Alta California missions as he had been obligated to do by the Viceroy and Royal Council in 1772. What the Father President found particularly galling was Croix's

²³⁹ Estado de las Misiones de la Nueva California, signed by Francisco Palóu, San Francisco, December 31, 1784, SBMA.

²⁴⁰ Serra to Father Francisco Pangua and Discretorium, Monterey, April 13, 1776, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Phs. in SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 423-443.

²⁴¹ Informe Del Estado de las Misiones de Monterey hasta principios Del Año de 1776, signed by Francisco Pangua, Mexico, December 9, 1776. Certified copy as of March 20, 1777 in AGN. Californias, Vol. 72 Transcript in SBMA.

²⁴² Serra to Teodoro de Croix, Monterey, August 22, 1778, AGN. Provincias Internas, Tomo 121. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, III, 248-255.

order that reports were to be submitted to Governor Neve who would forward them to him.²⁴³ Serra's sense of the proper relationship between military and clergy was offended. He cited several problems which prevented him from complying with the order. Croix had requested reports dating back to 1776. Serra had submitted all reports since that date to the College of San Fernando assuming they had been forwarded to him. Another obstruction was an order which he had from the College ordering him not to submit any reports to civil officials.²⁴⁴ Serra claimed he had neither the strength nor the paper to redo the backlog of reports requested.

The *Asesor General* at Arispe, after receiving Serra's indignant letter rendered his decisions.²⁴⁵ Serra was obliged to send in reports only from 1781 on, but they were to be submitted to Neve. Finally in January of 1783 Serra received an order concerning the problem from the College of San Fernando. He was told to comply with Croix's requests. To save himself time and trouble, he was to ask the individual missions to file reports in duplicate of which one was to be sent to the *Comandante General* and the other to the College.²⁴⁶

A royal decree of March 21, 1787 demanded biennial reports. Information was to be included on the number of missionaries at each mission and the stipends which they received; the number of male and female Indians; the number of children and the difference of all of the above from those listed in the previous report. A summary was to be written describing improvements and the general state of the missions.²⁴⁷ The Father President was prepared to deliver such a report, but was not requested to submit one until 1795. Why the postponement is not apparent. Lasuén had been notified of the necessity of such reports as early as March of 1789.²⁴⁸ The first Biennial Report was submitted for the years 1793-1794 on March 11, 1795.²⁴⁹ This ended the list of regular reports on the missions all of which dealt to some extent with economic activity. Other reports were demanded from time to time to deal with specific questions, but none were routine.

²⁴³ de Croix to Serra, Arispe, September 27, 1781, MNM. Lancaster-Jones Papers. Documentos Relativos a las Misiones de Californias, Vol. 2. Phs. in SBMA.

²⁴⁴ Serra to de Croix, Santa Barbara, April 28, 1782, AGN. Californias, Vol. II.

²⁴⁵ Galindo Navarro to de Croix, Arispe, August 23, 1782, SBMA.

²⁴⁶ de Croix to Serra, Arispe, October 11, 1782, SBMA. Further light is shed on the entire controversy in Geiger, *Life and Times*, II, 296-303.

²⁴⁷ Royal Decree, El Pardo, March 21, 1787. Printed in Mexico, September 9, 1787, SBMA.

²⁴⁸ Ugarte y Loyola to Lasuén, Chihuahua, March 24, 1789, SBMA, and Lasuén to Ugarte y Loyola, San Carlos, July 8, 1789, SBMA.

²⁴⁹ Biennial Report for the years 1793-1794 signed by Lasuén, San Carlos, March 11, 1795, SBMA. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, II, 377-381.

Mission Economic Relationships with Civilians, Military and Government



TOO FREQUENTLY AUTHORS HAVE FELT compelled to take one side or the other in the seemingly interminable argument between military and mission authorities in Alta California. Often patterns of conflict have been stressed rather than broad areas of agreement. Perhaps subsequent historians have been too eager to adopt Palóu's viewpoint which was understandably pro-missionary. When mission and presidio accounts are closely examined, it is difficult to avoid being impressed by the intimate relations between the two institutions and the many relationships and transactions which elicited no argument. Both recognized their basic interdependence and, although both fought bitterly when it appeared that essential prerogatives were being usurped, neither ever questioned the other's right to exist. Both mission and presidio were integral to a time-proven scheme designed to add to the imperial glory of Spain and this basic fact was recognized. When the monarchy and their role in it was threatened in the 19th century, neither mission nor presidio used the opportunity provided by absence of authority to attack its partner on the frontier. In fact, the reverse was true, the two cooperated more closely to insure their mutual survival which both acknowledged as interdependent. After 1810 the missions could easily have economically strangled the military and yet they did not. Not only were missions dependent upon the military for the small amount of protection which they could offer, but also for legitimate secular authority so necessary to maintain the bonds which saved society from anarchy. Military acted as sub-syndics and in the case of José de la Guerra, as factors through which missions were able to purchase manufactured products after 1810. The mission offered not only food and manufactured products, but also served as the agency through which native peoples could be Hispanicized and controlled. While missionaries grumbled about food ministered to presidios and the military complained about the wealth of

the missions compared to their own poverty after 1810, neither took advantage of the situation. The missions were not unduly molested and military personnel did not starve. Father Vicente Francisco de Sarria typified in a circular letter to the missionaries this spirit of cooperation.

You know the state of the nation and the misery and suffering of the monarchy on account of the war. I know it is not good to dispossess the neophytes, but it is essential for the missions to contribute goods and other necessities for the maintenance of the troops and their families as we did last year and which we must do again. It is a patriotic duty.²⁵⁰

The settlement of Alta California had been conceived of as a cooperative enterprise from the earliest days. In 1769 little dissension was apparent. Soldier and missionary were drawn together in a common effort. Once in California the exigencies of sickness, food shortages and potentially hostile natives served to heighten the dependence of all members of the expedition upon one another. Decisions and relationships were personally conducted since military and missionary institutions as yet had no formal organization and areas in which spheres of authority would later intersect and conflict had not been defined. At least in the initial stages of the colony, the military by necessity had the upper hand. The missionaries were numerically inferior and depended upon the soldiers for defense, rations and even the founding of a mission since military escorts were required. Serra himself recognized the necessity of soldiers to defend the fledgling establishments. Frequently he requested additional troops from the Viceroy, both as a labor force and as escorts to the missions.²⁵¹ Conflict, when it did begin in 1771, had an economic basis. Both institutions began to defend areas in which they resented interference from the other. Labor and rations provided fuel for early altercations, since both were desperately needed by each party. As a result of the initial spirit of cooperation, Mission San Carlos and the Presidio at Monterey had been built side by side. In need of laborers, Serra had petitioned and received from Governor Pedro Fages, four soldiers and a muleteer for whom he was to supply rations. Governor Fages soon reneged. He needed the men at the presidio, but because of limited food supplies, he insisted the mission continue to feed them. Henceforth they went to the mission for food but not for work, although the Governor assured Serra that at a later time he would send all his men to work at the mission. A corollary soon developed to the

²⁵⁰ Sarria to the missionaries, Soledad, June 6, 1814, AASF. Phs. in SBMA. Sarria was *Comisario Prefecto*. This office was created in 1812 and Sarria assumed the office in July of 1813. As *Commissary-Prefect* he was the delegate of the Franciscan Commissary General of the Indies in Madrid. This office had full control of all matters pertaining to the temporal management of the missions. Sarria's term of office was six years. See *Patente* appointing Fray Vicente Francisco Sarria *Commissary Prefect* of the California Missions. Mexico, July 15, 1812, SBMA.

²⁵¹ Serra to Francisco Carlos de Croix, Monterey, June 18, 1771, AGN. Californias, Vol. 66. Copy SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, I, 196-209.

argument which was to persist for years. Who controlled soldiers when they worked for the missions?²⁵²

The question did not involve the *escolta* or guard assigned to each mission which in the first years consisted of a corporal and up to ten or twelve men. Food rationed to them in keeping with precedents established in Lower California, was not charged to mission supplies. Until the missions reached the point of agricultural self-sufficiency these supplies were usually drawn from the presidial storehouse and the missionaries were in charge of rationing them to the guard. The Fathers gave the storehouse receipts for rations received and were required to keep an exact record of amounts drawn by each soldier since his rations were charged by the presidial storekeeper against his salary.²⁵³

In 1772 several other areas of contention developed. Serra found it necessary to voice several complaints to Governor Fages. Serra maintained that he ought to retain control over the sailors and muleteers who were employed at the missions. Fages, he complained, had refused to permit mules from the presidio to transport mission supplies. If he would not permit his mules to be used, he ought to give at least twelve mules to the planned Mission San Buenaventura. Serra also objected to the manner in which provisions were divided. Before 1774, all provisions sent from San Blas were consigned to the governor for his distribution. In the Father President's mind the whole scheme was ill-conceived. He suggested to Fages that provisions rationed to the missionaries, servants and Indians should be accounted for separately from those for the corporal, soldiers and couriers who received sustenance at the missions. Secondly, the account for the escort ought to be kept by the corporal rather than the missionaries. Appealing to Fages' self-interest, he pointed out that this would allow him to keep closer watch on the stock of provisions. Thirdly, he recommended to Fages that if soldiers of the escort wished to have a servant, the presidio should supply one so the constant pestering of the missionaries would cease.²⁵⁴

By October of 1772, Serra was becoming impetuous for the founding of Mission San Buenaventura and was disgusted with Fages for, as he viewed it, dragging his feet. Fages was equally disgruntled. He attempted

²⁵² Serra to Father Francisco Palóu, Monterey, June 21, 1771, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Trans. in *ibid.*, I, 237-245. Serra, I, 237-245.

²⁵³ *Ibid.* San Gabriel for example was given an escort of ten soldiers at its founding on September 8, 1771. On September 1, 1772 San Luis Obispo was given only two leather jacket soldiers and three Catalonian Volunteers as an escort.

²⁵⁴ Serra to Fages, San Diego, September 22, 1772, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, I, 272-277.

to delineate for Serra what he considered the proper spheres of authority for each of them. As he wrote to Serra:

I do not doubt that as much as it belongs to the illustrious and apostolic college of San Fernando in Mexico, the missions are entrusted to your Reverence and in spiritual matters as well as what is encompassed within the missions in regard to Indians, cattle belonging to them and the administration of them. However, your Reverence cannot be oblivious to the fact that all political and military matters, as well as the establishment of missions belong to me in accord with your Reverence, as are stated in the orders of His Excellency, the Marques de Croix.²⁵⁵

The Governor allowed that someone else could be assigned to ration food to the guard, but he said, he had no servants to provide for the soldiers.

Serra responded by reiterating his pleas for more mules, saying that without them Mission San Gabriel could not continue to exist. If supplies did not reach there before the rainy season, the mission would be in a dire situation since after that the roads would be impassable. Mission San Diego did not have sufficient mules to do the job and San Gabriel had only eight pack mules. Serra capitulated, saying that if it was necessary, the missionaries would take temporary charge of provisions ministered to the guard. This was conditional upon two premises. First, henceforth in each mission there would be built a separate warehouse to keep supplies for the King's account; second, a clear line of demarcation had to be drawn between goods provided to the escort and supplies for the rest of the mission.²⁵⁶

Fages was also upset with what he considered to be Serra's irresponsibility in allowing large numbers of neophytes to be baptized at Mission San Diego. Serra's total trust in God fit poorly with Fages' view of harsh reality. Ultimately, he knew the feeding of so many would be his responsibility. "Why," he muttered, "have the Fathers baptized so many?" It was indicative of poor planning in his mind to accept the responsibility of feeding so many mouths before having sufficient harvests to fill the need. Serra confided to Viceroy Bucareli: "His idea in making these complaints must surely have been because he feared we would ask him for provisions for the converts." Serra, by this time in Mexico, scoffed at Fages' cautiousness. In his estimation, Fages' worries were groundless since two supply ships lay in the harbor at San Diego. The new Christians had not "cost him (Fages) one spoonful of *pinole* or *atole*."²⁵⁷ Over

²⁵⁵ Fages to Serra, San Diego, September 22, 1772, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Phs. SBMA.

²⁵⁶ Serra to Fages, San Diego, October 2, 1772, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, I, 278-285.

²⁵⁷ Serra to Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa. Mexico City, May 21, 1773, SBMA. Trans. in *ibid.*, I, 345-373. In August of 1773, both the "San Antonio" and "San Carlos" dropped anchor at San Diego.

the course of the next year the position taken by Fages was vindicated. The last months of 1773 and 1774, until arrival of the "Santiago" at San Diego in March, brought the struggling colony close to starvation.

Serra's *Representación* to the Viceroy in the spring of 1773 outlined his complaints against Fages and he was eventually able to secure the removal of the stormy Catalan.²⁵⁸ The Father President insisted that henceforth members of the mission *escoltas* had to be under the authority of the missionaries. Further, he specified the number of soldiers who ought to be assigned to each mission. Next he entreated that the missionaries should be allowed free choice of a *mayordomo* or overseer from among the soldiers assigned to the mission guard. This man should not be removed without cause and he must not be compelled to take guard and sentinel duty. Serra impressed upon the Viceroy the importance of the *mayordomo* and his economic significance by stating:

This measure is of great importance for the advancement of the temporal affairs of the missions, for the Father cannot attend personally to everything, nor would he know how to direct all the manual work that comes up, for at the monastery they did not teach him this.²⁵⁹

Fages was accused of refusing to provide rations for the Indians and of living in luxury while poverty was the lot of the Fathers. Further, the only blacksmith and forge in the province was withheld by Fages at the Monterey Presidio. The zealous Father President accused the Governor of having deprived Missions San Carlos and San Diego of mules assigned to them from the beginning. The mules were being used by the presidio for superfluous tasks. Bucareli was implored to order Fages to release to the missions cattle and their increase which were assigned for Missions San Francisco and Santa Clara. The missionaries, Serra allowed, would take better care of them.

While Serra was in Mexico, Fages remained in California unaware of the exact charges being pressed against him. He was able to make only a feeble attempt at self-defense since he could only guess at Serra's accusations.²⁶⁰ He had done everything within his power to supply food for the missions when supplies were short. In 1771 and 1772 when food supplies were low, he had aided the missionaries with more than fifteen *tercios* of flour, weighing ninety-five arrobas. Because cattle were scarce and could be used only for breeding, he had conducted his famous bear hunt. The

²⁵⁸ Serra's *Representación* to Bucareli, Mexico City, March 13, 1773. Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 2-36.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ Fages to Bucareli, Monterey, November 30, 1773, AGN. Californias. Vol. 66. Four letters of Fages to Bucareli under this date are in volume 66 and all contain pertinent information. Phs. SBMA.

provisions brought on the "San Antonio" and "San Carlos" were distributed with all equity possible between mission and presidio. It had been left to him to make a distribution of cattle and mules brought by Captain Rivera y Moncada's party from Lower California in 1769 and he had done it as fairly as possible.²⁶¹ He and Serra agreed that when more cattle arrived, a similar distribution would be made, but despite repeated entreaties to Governor Barri to send more, none had arrived. Fages then explained the regulations which he had promulgated for the governance of the mission guards.

Serra's success in Mexico City in itself redressed the balance of power between military and missionary in Alta California and one can only assume that this was Bucareli's intention. The missionaries were granted absolute power over removal of members of the mission guard whose conduct they found unbecoming. In a sweeping statement, it was decided that:²⁶²

... the management, control, and education of the baptized Indians pertains exclusively to the missionary Fathers, it was declared that it ought to be thus in all economic matters, just as a father of a family has charge of his house and of the education and correction of his children, and that the governor of California should be advised to preserve harmonious relations and communication with those missionary Fathers.²⁶³

The *Echeveste Reglamento* further settled the question of the proper relationship between mission and presidio.²⁶⁴ Each mission was assigned a corporal and five soldiers as an escort. Guards for new missions were to be taken from the more secure missions so as not to cause additional expense to the government.

As the capstone to his achievements in Mexico, Serra secured the removal of Fages because he had prevented the spiritual and temporal advancement of the California establishments.²⁶⁵ Fages' replacement was to be Captain Fernando de Rivera y Moncada of the leather jacket soldiers. The provisions of the *Echeveste Reglamento* were reiterated in Bucareli's instruction to Rivera y Moncada.²⁶⁶ He was charged with maintenance of harmonious relationships with the missionaries in all

²⁶¹ For a list of the animals brought north by Rivera, see Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, I, 50-52.

²⁶² Decision of His Excellency and the Royal Council, Mexico, May 6, 1773. Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 37-55.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ Regulation for the Peninsula of California, Juan José de Echeveste, Mexico, May 19, 1773. *Ibid.*, III, 57-77.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, III, 122-123.

²⁶⁶ Instrucción que debe observar el comandante nombrado para los nuevos establecimientos de San Diego y Monterrey, Mexico, March 20, 1777, AGN. Californias, Vol. 66. Printed in Ernest J. Burrus, *Diario del Capitán Comandante Fernando de Rivera y Moncada con un Apéndice Documental*, 2 vols., Madrid, 1967, Vol. II, 375-389.

things. Both the military and religious should confine themselves to their proper concerns. The Governor, however, kept his authority over the location and founding of future missions. It was indicative of the conflicts inherent in the Spanish colonization scheme that Rivera was enjoined to see to the supply of water and wood and to inspect the quality of land at new mission sites. Further, he was given instructions as to the actual construction of new missions and to the planting of grains and fruit. It was a clear invitation to further conflict. Serra had succeeded in getting a series of specific requests granted by the Viceroy, but the government, outside of issuing a number of general and conflicting pronouncements, made no effort to redefine the relationship between mission and presidio. As subsequent disagreements over reports, price regulations and supplies prove, this was no more apparent anywhere than in economic relationships. Because the Spanish system of institutional checks and balances discouraged bold action, Bucareli made decisions on specific issues, but refused to make any assertive redefinition. The same inertia immobilized officials in California who did not feel free to define relationships in terms of the frontier situation. However, Bucareli, by acknowledging Serra's request, did further the development of the missions, particularly in economic affairs, autonomously from military control. Serra had failed to have spheres of authority defined. Too frequently the inevitable attacks and counterattacks between military and missionary have been attributed to incompetent military officials rather than acknowledging the feuds as shortcomings of the systems.

In the spring of 1774 Serra arrived back in California and found Rivera y Moncada as difficult to deal with as Fages had been. Rivera assumed the governorship at Monterey on May 25, 1774 and by July Serra was voicing his complaints to the Father Guardian. The old disagreements regarding the establishment and expansion of missions remained. Serra wished to reduce the escort at San Carlos by three and that of San Diego by six, thus providing a guard for the founding of San Buenaventura.²⁶⁷ Rivera considered the plan foolhardy and cited the danger of revolt.²⁶⁸ The problem of mules once more intruded. Serra had received word that Bucareli had responded to his requests for mules by ordering one hundred to be shipped to Loreto and driven up the peninsula. Only eighty-nine were alive after the voyage to Loreto. A year later, in July of 1775, fifty-nine of the mules had arrived, although with no certificate of ownership. Who, Serra wrote to the Father Guardian, owned the mules? Serra and Rivera both knew the mules had been sent for the

²⁶⁷ Serra to Father Guardian and Discretorium, Monterey, July 18, 1774, BNM. Cartas de Junipero Serra. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 94-119.

²⁶⁸ Burrus, ed., *Diario del Capitán Comandante Fernando de Rivera y Moncada*, I, 27.

missions, but the Governor, who also needed pack animals, determined to make use of at least some of them until he should be ordered to do otherwise, although he did release thirty-three of the animals to Serra as early as August of 1775.²⁶⁹ On August 10th the second contingent of mules arrived including twenty-five mules and he-mules.²⁷⁰ On August 16, 1775, Serra wrote to Rivera, asking that seven mules be delivered to Father Lasuén for the founding of Mission San Juan Capistrano.²⁷¹ The Governor graciously replied the next day, agreeing to send the seven mules; three he-mules and two mules from the latest string and a mule and he-mule from the previous.

In two letters, one to Serra and a later one to the Viceroy, Rivera justified his confiscation of the mules.²⁷² In the first to Serra, he admitted the rightful ownership of the animals, but based his action on the need in which the military stood. Of the first shipment, he was keeping sixteen at Monterey and he had authorized the Presidio of San Diego to keep twelve. He assured Serra that thirty-one were being relinquished to him. He continued saying:

Those which remain here are of such a great and real necessity that if at the time such a place had been known to me in the province, have no doubt that I would have taken over a hacienda and confiscated the number necessary for the supply of said presidios.²⁷³

While Rivera's actions were abrupt and at first secretive, his need was real. Mules were of paramount importance for both presidio and mission. "Believe me, your Reverence," the *Comandante* wrote, "in order for there to be missions, it is necessary to have presidios and where soldiers go on foot, there cannot be presidios." Mules, it must be remembered were the backbone of the transportation system. Movement of supplies and people were dependent upon them. Without them, supplies could not be moved to the mission storehouses and fields could not be plowed. Rivera, however, was correct in his assessment. Without mounted soldiers, the missions could not be adequately protected and the mission regimen could not be enforced upon recalcitrant neophytes. Perhaps Serra sensed this since the argument appears to have subsided.

Rivera y Moncada was a timorous man, although with reason. His job was a difficult one in the face of numerous shortages, real and imagined, which plagued him and he was as zealous in his solicitude for

²⁶⁹ Serra to Father Francisco Pangua, Monterey, July 24, 1775, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 288-297.

²⁷⁰ Burrus, ed., *Diario del Capitán Comandante Fernando de Rivera y Moncada*, I, 167.

²⁷¹ Serra to Rivera, Mission San Carlos, August 16, 1775 and Rivera to Serra, Monterey, August 17, 1775. *Ibid.*, I, 171-173.

²⁷² Rivera to Serra, Monterey, June 22, 1775. *Ibid.*, I, 173-174. Also see Rivera to Bucareli, Monterey, August 23, 1775, AAFH.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

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²⁷¹ Serra to Rivera, Mission San Carlos, August 16, 1775 and Rivera to Serra, Monterey, August 17, 1775. *Ibid.*, I, 171-173.

²⁷² Rivera to Serra, Monterey, June 22, 1775. *Ibid.*, I, 173-174. Also see Rivera to Bucareli, Monterey, August 23, 1775, AAFH.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

the military as Serra was for the Missions. In his *Representación* to the viceroy, Serra had requested young men from the neighborhood of San Blas to be taken to California in the capacity of sailors, to serve the missions as farmers, cowboys and muleteers.²⁷⁴ Such men should serve, at least four to a mission, without the commander of the presidio having the right to move them. During their years of service, they should be paid a sailor's salary from San Blas and free rations at the missions. If at the end of one year's service they desired to return to San Blas, they would be permitted to do so. Bucareli and the Royal Council granted the request.²⁷⁵ Thus was added a new burden to the California economy, responsibility for which would fall to the Governor. The *Echeveste Reglamento* elaborated further, stipulating that workers were to receive rations for five years and sailors for two.²⁷⁶ Echeveste then made a cryptic reference to men bringing wives; they should work and labor in the fields so as to become self-sufficient. The Royal Fiscal, José Areche clarified the point in his opinion.²⁷⁷ Sailors were clearly differentiated from families who were to receive rations for five years and pay for two. The question in Alta California concerned the sailors. Were they to receive salaries for only two years, or as Serra claimed, for as long as they chose to remain?

If Serra's interpretation were correct, Rivera feared a shortage of supplies for the military. In October 1775, Rivera wrote to the warehouse keeper, Juan Soler, for an account of maize received in the past year and the amount which had been distributed to date.²⁷⁸ Soler replied the same day.²⁷⁹ He had received 433 fanegas, 10 almuds, which he began to ration on August 18. As of October 21 he had distributed 137 fanegas, 11 almuds to the presidio and the three missions in the district. He estimated, with 295 fanegas, 11 almuds remaining, supplies would last until February of 1776. Rivera feared a shortage with reason. The previous year, 600 fanegas of maize had been received and the families had not consumed any until they arrived in November. Less corn had been received in 1775.²⁸⁰ With this in view, he told Serra, he was suspending double rations and reducing the ration of unmarried people by half, to one-half almud weekly. He advised Serra to consider the account rendered by Soler, which he had enclosed. He reminded Serra that the six servants at San

²⁷⁴ Serra's *Representación* to the Viceroy, Mexico, March 13, 1773. Bolton, *Palou's New California*, III, 3-36.

²⁷⁵ Decision of His Excellency and the Royal Council, Mexico, May 6, 1773. *Ibid.*, III, 37-55.

²⁷⁶ Regulations for the Peninsula of California and the New Establishments of Monterey, Juan José Echeveste. Mexico, May 24, 1773. *Ibid.*, III, 57-77.

²⁷⁷ Opinion of the Fiscal, Mexico, June 14, 1773. *Ibid.*, III, 78-89.

²⁷⁸ Rivera y Moncada to Señor don Juan Soler, Monterey, October 22, 1775. Burrus, *Diario del Capitán Comandante Fernando de Rivera y Moncada*, I, 200.

²⁷⁹ Soler to Rivera y Moncada, Monterey, October 22, 1775. *Ibid.*, I, 206.

²⁸⁰ Rivera y Moncada to Fray Junípero Serra, Monterey, October 23, 1775. *Ibid.*, I, 206-207.

Carlos, five at San Antonio and two at San Luis Obispo, drew rations from the Presidio of Monterey. "It is evident," he said, "that the remaining supplies would not suffice." In such case, would the mission be willing to supply the presidio? If not, he could not guarantee rations for mission servants and Serra could have recourse to the Viceroy.

In a second letter to Serra on the same day, Rivera dealt with salaries for mission servants.²⁸¹ He claimed the *Echeveste Reglamento* implied that unmarried servants were entitled to salaries for only two years commencing with the beginning of 1774, hence, 1775 would be the last year in which they were entitled to salaries. Rivera suggested the conflict be sent to the Viceroy for his resolution. On the surface, the question of salaries does not seem to have been Rivera's concern. However, cash salaries were rarely paid in California, so such wages would have been paid in goods from the presidial store, thereby further depleting already inadequate supplies. The ambiguous *Reglamento* provided him with a loophole.

To discuss at length the intricacies of the argument would be pointless, but a few details will serve to illustrate the conflicting economic needs of mission and presidio. Serra took it upon himself to remind Rivera that Soler did not include fifty or more fanegas of wheat raised on the King's land nor flour left over from the previous year.²⁸² Also the presidio had in its possession a quantity of hardtack often used as a corn substitute, and Serra guessed there must have been a substantial quantity of beans on hand. Finally, he questioned Rivera about the plentiful supply of corn at the San Diego Presidio. In reply to the question of whether the missions could make up shortages at the presidio if they occurred, Serra answered:

In such a case, which, I hope to God will not happen, the missions will do what they have so many times done; they will give for the upkeep of the soldiers all that they stand in need of, and all the missions possess.

The Father President then recounted all instances in which aid had been given. In 1774 Mission San Gabriel had harvested 110 fanegas which was used to feed mission escorts at San Gabriel, San Diego, San Luis Obispo and San Antonio. In each of these missions livestock had been slaughtered to feed the soldiers. Everytime the pack train from the presidio was delayed, the missionaries gladly fed their escorts. In conclusion, Serra reiterated his willingness to help the military:

Even if it may be necessary, for some time, to send the greater part, or all, of our convert Christians who can do so to look for food in the mountains, or on the beach, as they did not many years ago.

²⁸¹ Rivera y Moncada to Fray Junípero Serra, Monterey, October 23, 1775. *Ibid.*, I, 207-208.

²⁸² Serra to Fernando Rivera y Moncada, Monterey, October 24, 1775, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 360-367.

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Rivera quickly replied to Serra's letter. The beans were there, he admitted, but they were two years old and had hardly improved with age. The hardtack was not intended to be rationed to the troops, but rather for the voyages of exploration to the Northwest. There were 700 fanegas of corn at San Diego, but with the lack of mules, how was it to be transported to Monterey? This was not the end of the argument, but it degenerated to dredging up past grievances on the part of both.²⁸³

Serra wrote a second letter to Rivera dealing with salaries in which he disagreed with the governor's interpretation of the *Echeveste Reglamento*, insisting the two year limitation on salaries applied only to families who undertook the voyage to California.²⁸⁴ The new missions to be established were also entitled to servants under the same conditions. Salaries, in Serra's opinion, were to be calculated from the time when laborers arrived in California, not from the effective date of the *Reglamento*. Serra knew Rivera would not accept his interpretation and appealed to Viceroy Bucareli for a decision in October of 1775.²⁸⁵ He described the argument and asked for a definitive answer. For the time, at least, no decision was rendered. Serra did not totally comprehend the situation at the presidio and he was unaware that all of the supplies there were not at the disposal of the troops and servants. Rivera, for his part, failed to see why he should provide for persons working at the missions in view of his supply problem. He estimated correctly that the missions could care for those people. The governor considered sending a few Indians away from the missions a more acceptable alternative than depriving the troops. Serra held the opposite viewpoint. His primary objective was the conversion of Indians and the function of the military was to further that goal. Anything destructive of his aim, such as sending neophytes to the hills, was to be avoided at all cost, hence his objection to assuming the obligation of providing rations which Rivera attempted to foist upon him. Despite his threats, Rivera did not suspend rations for the mission servants. On October 31, he ordered Soler to deliver flour, beans, corn and meat for the servants at San Antonio.²⁸⁶

The issue of the cattle for Missions San Francisco and Santa Clara, which had poisoned relations between Fages and Serra, was finally resolved during Rivera's term. The Father President was confident that the decision of the Viceroy and Council would solve the problem, but

²⁸³ Rivera y Moncada to Fray Junípero Serra, Monterey, October 25, 1775. Burrus, *Diario del Capitán Comandante Fernando de Rivera y Moncada*, I, 209-211.

²⁸⁴ Serra to Fernando Rivera y Moncada, Monterey, October 24, 1775, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 352-359.

²⁸⁵ Serra to Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa, Monterey, October 29, 1775. University of Texas, Austin. Stephens Collection. Trans. in *Ibid.*, II, 370-377.

²⁸⁶ Rivera y Moncada to Señor don Juan Soler, October 31, 1775. Burrus, *Diario Del Capitán Comandante Fernando de Rivera y Moncada*, I, 213.

Rivera refused to release the cattle without further instructions.²⁸⁷ As soon as definitive orders from the Viceroy arrived, Rivera sent an inventory to Serra and released the cattle without further ado.²⁸⁸ The cattle totaled ninety-two head; thirty-seven cows, sixteen calves, four young castrated bulls, two adult bulls, eighteen young females, and fifteen young bulls.²⁸⁹

Serra's request for *majordomos* to oversee mission industry and agriculture was passed over by Echeveste in the formation of his regulation, however Serra kept up his pressure to have them provided.²⁹⁰ While he had been in Mexico, Fages had allowed an overseer to be chosen in each mission. Serra returned to discover that Rivera y Moncada disapproved of the entire scheme which Serra felt was so essential for the success of the missions. Serra presented his argument to the Viceroy maintaining it would not cost the King one cent, since the *majordomo* would be chosen from among the six soliders regularly assigned to each mission. All the plan implied, said Serra, was that one soldier would devote himself to the business of the mission while the others took care of sentry duty and horses. Although Serra admitted that he had secured no approval for his plan, he told the Viceroy that he had received letters from all of the missionaries insisting on its necessity. The ever cautious Rivera had informed Serra that a mission escort of six was too few to spare one of them for such duties.

The economic management of the missions and relations with the military were altered by a change instituted by the College of San Fernando during Rivera y Moncada's term.²⁹¹ Serra was advised that the economic management of each mission belonged to the missionaries of each mission without interference of the Father President, except in exceptional cases. Serra was no longer to be in charge of distributing goods sent from Mexico unless they had no designation for a particular mission. From this time on each mission carried its own account with the College of San Fernando and officials in Mexico, implying that each sent in its own request and received in return an annual *memoria*. Relations with the military received much attention and most of the changes must have been in reaction to complaints received. Article seven stipulated that

the ministers treat the corporal and soldiers with all moderation and prudence, not

²⁸⁷ Serra to Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa, Monterey, July 19, 1774. The University of Texas at Austin. Stephens Collection. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 130-135.

²⁸⁸ Serra to Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa, Monterey, September 9, 1774. AGI. Estado 43. Copy in Sutro Collection, San Francisco. Trans. in Cutter, ed., *The California Coast: Documents from the Sutro Collection*, 120-129.

²⁸⁹ Rivera y Moncada to Fray Junípero Serra, August 16, 1774. Burrus, *Diario del Capitán Comandante Fernando de Rivera y Moncada*, I, 50-51.

²⁹⁰ Serra to Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa, Monterey, August 24, 1774. The University of Texas, Austin. Stephens Collection. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 136-147.

²⁹¹ Fray Francisco Pangua to the California Missionaries, Mexico, February 7, 1775. Copy by Palóu in SBMA.

exasperating them with sharp words and bad treatment, and if perhaps it were necessary to admonish them, let it be with religious affability and serenity.

Complaints concerning the *escolta* were not to be made by the missionaries, but were to be transmitted through the Father President. The employment of soldiers' wives or any other women inside the house was to be deplored. The Father Guardian felt too many complaints and reports were being made directly to Royal officials without adequate control by the College of San Fernando. In the future, all such reports were to be submitted to the College for its approval.

In the spring of 1776, Serra made an attempt to defend himself against charges which he assumed instigated the new orders from the College.²⁹² Great pains were taken in describing aid to the military. Serra reported that Captains Anza and Rivera along with Fray Pedro Font had stayed at Mission San Gabriel for a month and had used up that mission's entire stock of candles and chocolate. Anza had been provided with saddle and pack animals at San Gabriel and again at San Carlos. While he was at San Carlos, he had been provided for with generosity and a calf had even been killed to provide fresh meat. He had been provided with an arroba of chocolate which cost San Carlos fifty pesos and had been forgotten by the Captain.

In September of 1774, Felipe de Neve replaced Felipe Barri as Governor of the Californias with residence at Loreto. On August 16, 1775, the capital was removed by royal decree from Loreto to Monterey and in July of 1776, Neve was ordered to remove his administration to Alta California while Rivera y Moncada was to exchange places with him. Neve arrived at the new capital on February 3, 1777. In August he received a request from the Viceroy for a report on missions and presidios, which he did not complete until December of 1778.²⁹³ While Serra described what had been furnished by missions to the military, Neve provided a comprehensive summation of aid given to the missions by the government; much of it directed into the hands of the missionaries through the military establishment. Neve did not state what years his report covered, but it included sets of figures for two years. Internal evidence suggests the years 1776 and 1777.²⁹⁴ I reproduce in Table 8, expenses directly incurred by the missions.

²⁹² Serra to Father Francisco Pangua and Discretorium, Monterey, April 13, 1776, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 422-443.

²⁹³ Neve's Report on Missions and Presidios, Monterey, December 29, 1778, AGN. Provincias Internas, Vol. 121. Phs. in SBMA.

²⁹⁴ The first year covered in the report includes the missions of San Diego, San Gabriel, San Luis Obispo, San Antonio and San Carlos. The second year adds San Juan Capistrano, San Francisco and Santa Clara which were founded in late 1776 and early 1777. See Maynard Geiger, "Important California Missionary Dates Determined," *The Americas*, Vol. 2, 1946, 287-293; J. H. Bowman, "The Birthdays of the California Missions," *The Americas*, Vol. 20, 1964, 289-308.

TABLE 8

GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES TO THE MISSIONS
1776-1777

| | | |
|------|---|--------------|
| 1776 | For the stipends of the ten missionaries at 400 pesos each | 4,000 | p |
| | For double rations conceded to the missionaries and three supernumeraries | 1,779 | p 3 r |
| | Freight paid by the government from Mexico to San Blas on 120 arrobas | 195 | p* |
| | Sailor's salaries for 30 peons distributed 6 to each mission | 3,600 | p |
| | Value of rations for the peons | 2,053 | p 1 r |
| | Total | 11,627 | p 4 r |
| 1777 | For the stipend of the 16 missionaries at 400 pesos each | 6,400 | p |
| | Freight paid by the government from Mexico to San Blas on 192 arrobas | 240 | p |
| | Sailor's salaries for 19 peons | 2,280 | p |
| | Value of rations for the peons | 1,300 | p 2 r |
| | Total | 10,220 | p 2 r |

* José de Gálvez had allowed each missionary 6 arrobas of goods per year free of transportation charges. This was subsequently raised to 12 arrobas. Charges were computed at a rate of 10 reales per arroba.

Table 8 does not include other expenses attributable to the missions such as rations and pay given to artisans and the mission guards. Included in the expenses for Presidio San Diego, for example, were two carpenters who were paid annually 300 pesos each. Since Neve explains they worked both for mission and presidio, a portion of their cost should have been charged to the missions, but was not. Two blacksmiths in the same category were also charged to the presidio. To each mission was assigned a guard composed of a corporal and five soldiers. A corporal's salary was 400 pesos per year and a soldier's, 365 pesos. On this basis, the expense incurred by mission guards at five missions in 1776 equaled 11,125 pesos while the following year's total was 17,800 pesos.

It may seem unfair to appropriate expenses in this fashion since expenses incurred by both missions and presidios were covered by the Royal Treasury, with the exception of the annual stipends derived by the missionaries from the Pious Fund. The missions were jealous of and eager to collect every peso owed to them by the military. It seems only proper to point out the services provided by the government through the military which were never charged to mission accounts. To have done so would have been foolish, since in either case the government paid the bills. The missions, however, attempted to receive payment for every service or product given to the military.

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Until 1810 contributions made to the government by the missions without thought of repayment were rare. On at least two occasions before that date, however, free donations were made to the government. In 1779, Spain entered with France in a war against England which was involved in an attempt to put down the rebellion by her North American colonies. While England contemplated no attack on Spanish California, repercussions were felt in that distant province. Although Spain had gone to war on June 23, 1779, the decree was not published in Mexico until August 13, 1779.²⁹⁵ Commandant General Teodoro de Croix wrote Serra in February of the next year requesting public prayers to be said for the successful issue of the contest. Serra received Croix's letter on June 13th and two days later responded by assuring him that the prayers would happily be said.²⁹⁶ On the same day Serra sent a circular letter to the missionaries admonishing them to pray for the success of Spanish arms.²⁹⁷ Meanwhile, on August 17, 1780, Charles III of Spain had promulgated a decree for war contributions which the California missionaries were to find more onerous to fulfill.²⁹⁸ It was decreed "that for once, and in the nature of a donation," every free Indian should contribute one peso and each Spaniard two. The order was communicated by José de Gálvez to Croix who in turn wrote Serra saying:

By Royal *Cedula* of August 17, 1780 which was communicated to me by José de Gálvez, it has pleased His Majesty to order that his vassals of America contribute for one time a donation of one peso per Indian and other castes and two for each Spaniard and noble, to sustain the present war . . . I desire that you comply with this immediately.²⁹⁹

Croix told Serra he did not feel that the requested donation would overburden the Indians and suggested the requirement could be met out of community assets. Missions which were poor in assets might be exempted, but the missionaries would have to make formal requests to the Governor who would forward them to the Commandant General. Each mission was to draw up a *padrón* or census of all subjects over eighteen years together with the amount of produce turned into the Governor which was to be sold to cover the donation.

Paying the donation in cash was impossible for most of the missions and the equivalent value in produce was difficult for some. Mission San Diego, for example, had little cash and in addition was in debt to San Gabriel and San Juan Capistrano for produce.³⁰⁰ Serra explained the problem to the

²⁹⁵ Verger to Lasuén, Mexico, January 14, 1780, SBMA.

²⁹⁶ Serra to Teodoro de Croix, Monterey, June 15, 1780, SBMA.

²⁹⁷ Serra to the Missionaries of Mission San Antonio and Elsewhere, Monterey, June 15, 1780, SBMA.

²⁹⁸ The King of Spain on War Contributions, San Ildefonso, August 17, 1780, SBMA.

²⁹⁹ de Croix to Serra, Arispe, August 12, 1781, SBMA.

³⁰⁰ Status of San Diego Mission at the end of December, 1781, by Lasuén, AGN. Documentos para la Historia de Mexico, Ser. 2, Vol. 2. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, II, 356-360.

Father Guardian. The Indians had never had any pesos and they could not understand why money was needed to make war. All of the missions, with the exception of San Diego and San Juan Capistrano, had been able to meet the obligation on the basis of a plan worked out by the Governor. Money was realized "from the offerings for Masses, which a number of soldiers owed," and from debts which they had run up at the missions. The Governor, in contrast to his previous policy, allowed soldiers to run up debts at the presidial storehouses which enabled him to collect the necessary cash. Governor Neve evidently consolidated the amount owed as a donative. After receiving produce from the missions, he in return paid the donation. "His method," said Serra, "worked smoothly and the result has been that the Indians, without their realizing it, have paid throughout the missions the pesos required of them. . . ."³⁰¹ The argument concerning the two missions which had not been able to pay the assessment continued for some time. Hubert H. Bancroft claims all eight missions eventually paid the donative for a total of something less than 1,071 pesos.³⁰²

In 1793 the process began again with the news that war had been declared between Spain and France. In October news of the war reached California and Governor José Joaquín de Arrillaga informed Father President Lasuén on October 9th.³⁰³ Several weeks later Lasuén sent Arrillaga an acknowledgement in which he assured him the missions would aid with prayers which were the only contributions which they had to offer.³⁰⁴ At the same time, Lasuén relayed the request for prayers and any other voluntary contributions to the other missionaries. This request was easily fulfilled.³⁰⁵

The next episode involved a letter from Viceroy Branciforte to Governor Borica in 1795 suggesting that each Spaniard donate two pesos and all other white or mixed citizens, one peso, while Indians were asked for four reales.³⁰⁶ Borica, who succeeded Arrillaga in 1794, communicated the letter to Lasuén.³⁰⁷ Each mission was requested to contribute according to its ability and the amount collected was to be remitted to the nearest *Habilitado* who would relay it to the Viceroy through the hands of the Governor.

Lasuén, upset with the appeal, composed a lengthy financial statement

³⁰¹ Serra to Father Francisco Pangua, Monterey, July 17, 1782, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, IV, 142-157.

³⁰² Bancroft, *History of California*, Vol. I, 428 fn. For an example of how the donative was determined see *Padrón* of Mission San Carlos, San Carlos, December 22, 1781. Bancroft Library, Prov. State Papers, Benecia. Military. Xerox copy in SBMA.

³⁰³ Arrillaga to Lasuén, Monterey, October 9, 1793, SBMA.

³⁰⁴ Lasuén to the Missionaries, Santa Barbara, October 28, 1793, SBMA.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ Viceroy Branciforte to the Governor, Mexico, June 17, 1795. Copy as of October 7, 1795, Monterey sent to Lasuén, SBMA.

³⁰⁷ Borica to Lasuén, Monterey, October 16, 1795, SBMA.

on the missions, justifying his position that no donative should be asked of the missions.³⁰⁸ In addition, he pointed to contributions the missions were already being called upon to make to the military. First, he said, of the thirty missionaries in California, only twenty-six received stipends. After the pittance which the Fathers lived on was deducted, the rest was devoted to the maintenance and progress of the missions. For this purpose all alms which the missions received from natives and sailors were set aside along with any other monies donated or earned. Missionaries served the four presidios without salary or remuneration of any kind. The Fathers performed all of the functions of chaplains, which if paid, would cost the government over 2,000 pesos per year. Officials in Mexico City had previously allowed that at one of the presidios payment for these services should be made, but no reimbursement had ever been received. "I have maintained silence," he commented, "and I would not have spoken now unless I heard that the present crisis confronts me with the question: What are you doing for the royal service?" The Indians did not have all of the food and clothing which they needed and all mission income was devoted to providing those things and the implements necessary to produce them. Lasuén also said that

At the present time, if steps were taken to withdraw part of the resources, funds, products of industry or other means of support, and to deflect them to some other objective, it would assuredly bring but little benefit to the latter, and result in much hardship in our work, which is highly esteemed by the King.

The thrust of Lasuén's argument was, since the missions served to support and extend the conquest, they in fact constituted a genuine royal service. For this war the missions offered Masses and prayers, while civilians and military contributed 3,881 pesos.

In November of 1798, the call again went out from Bishop Francisco Rousset of Sonora for war contributions.³⁰⁹ Lasuén sent the letter as a circular to all missionaries asking them to append a statement of what each mission was able to contribute. None of the missionaries offered material contributions, stating they would offer prayers, or that they lived only by alms of the King. In response to the Bishop's letter, Lasuén offered an abridgment of his earlier letter to Borica.³¹⁰ The King, he concluded, expected no other temporal contributions beyond those already being made. The issue was consequently dropped.

Father President Junípero Serra apparently made a conscientious and honest attempt to collect the war contribution ordered in August of 1781.

³⁰⁸ Lasuén to Borica, San Carlos, October 18, 1795, SBMA.

³⁰⁹ Bishop of Sonora to the Missionaries, Zacatecas, November 13, 1798, SBMA.

³¹⁰ Lasuén to Don Fray Francisco Rousset de Jesús, San Carlos, March 4, 1799, SBMA.

There was a peculiar difference between this request and those made later of Father Lasuén. The first was an order, while the others were requests, which may account for the less than enthusiastic response. It would appear, in fact, that Lasuén and the missionaries could have made a contribution had they been willing. Mission credits in Mexico were carefully controlled by the missionaries themselves. Warrants in favor of the missions drawn on the presidios were carefully counterbalanced by the requests for goods remitted by the missionaries to the College. In consequence, the balance of any mission in Mexico was zero, or in some instances, a slight deficit. Throughout the period, increasing purchases from the missions by the military financed a better standard of living for the missions as is evidenced by building programs and increased purchases from Mexico. At any time, purchases could have been reduced without danger of starvation, thereby releasing surpluses which could have been donated.

The Monterey presidial accounts serve to illustrate mounting mission credits.³¹¹ In 1795 the account with Mission San Carlos held a balance in favor of the mission of 1,740 pesos, 5 reales, including a balance brought forward from the previous year. Of the total owed to the mission, 1,200 pesos were remitted to Mexico in a warrant against the *Habilitado General* payable to San Carlos. The requested contribution was one-half peso per Indian which usually applied only to males over eighteen years of age. In 1795 Mission San Carlos counted 444 males of which a proportion must have been under eighteen.³¹² However, assuming a ridiculously high figure of 400 liable persons, the total contribution asked for would only have been 200 pesos. In December of 1796 there was a balance in favor of the mission of 1,333 pesos, 7 reales and in 1797 the account was balanced because four warrants in favor of the mission were drawn up.³¹³ Total credits in warrants remitted to Mexico for the mission were 2,873 pesos. In 1798 accounts were again balanced, but with the help of 7,200 pesos in warrants sent with the account to the *Habilitado General*. The balances were corroborated by the accounts of Mission San Carlos.³¹⁴ Interestingly, in 1799, the year in which the second donation was requested, the mission owed the presidio 166 pesos, 3 reales. This debt is

³¹¹ Monterey Presidio Account, signed by José Argüello, December 31, 1795, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³¹² Zephyrin Engelhardt, *Mission San Carlos Borromeo*, Santa Barbara, California, 1934, 243.

³¹³ Monterey Presidio account, signed by José Pérez Fernández, December 31, 1796, AASF. Phs. SBMA and Monterey Presidio account, signed by Hermenegildo Sal, December 31, 1797, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³¹⁴ Monterey Presidio account, signed by Hermenegildo Sal, December 31, 1798, AASF. Phs. SBMA., and accounts of Mission San Carlos signed by Fathers Francisco Pujol and Baltasar Carnicer, December 31, 1798, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

deceptive, if not considered in context with the large warrants remitted in previous years.³¹⁵ The deficit was temporary, since in the following year the presidio owed the mission 904 pesos, 7 reales, including the previous year's balance.³¹⁶

The same phenomenon, although not as pronounced, was obvious between Mission Santa Barbara and the Santa Barbara Presidio. From 1794 through 1800 the mission collected 4,205 pesos in warrants against the presidio, but even with this extra income, the mission failed to cover its purchases and found its Mexico City account 2,200 pesos in arrears.³¹⁷ The apparent explanation is the low volume of trade with the presidio compared to Mission San Carlos. The accounts with the presidio suggest that because the mission had been in existence for a little more than a decade, its surplus of manufactured items needed by the presidio was limited. San Carlos supplied quantities of items such as shoes, barrels, adzes, gunsights and skilled laborers, while Santa Barbara sold mainly agricultural goods.³¹⁸ However, even this mission could not live by the alms of the King alone, since its income increased over two-thirds annually by drafts against the presidio. While it appears that Lasuén rejected the pleas for donations on a principle important to the missionaries, it is also apparent, in some cases, that the donative was well within the realm of financial possibility.

Contributions were again solicited from the missions in 1809 and 1810 in response to Napoleon's depredation of the Iberian Peninsula. During his abbreviated term, Viceroy Pedro de Garibay ordered contributions to be collected from all classes of citizens to aid mother Spain. The viceregal order was released in the fall of 1808, but it was not communicated by Governor Arrillaga to Father President Tapis until February of 1809.³¹⁹ Tapis informed Arrillaga that he had notified the missionaries of the request and exhorted them to offer "the spiritual assistance which concerns us and is most appropriate to our Franciscan state of life."³²⁰ Further, he had asked each one to cede a portion of the annual stipend in proportion to the financial status of their mission. However, Tapis also indicated a technical problem which made him hesitant to order the missionaries to make financial donations. A donation of money by one of

³¹⁵ Monterey Presidio Account, signed by Hermenegildo Sal, December 31, 1799, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³¹⁶ Monterey Presidio Account, no signature, December 31, 1800, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³¹⁷ *Memorias* for goods remitted to Mission Santa Barbara, 1794-1800, signed by the Procurator of the College of San Fernando, SBMA.

³¹⁸ Libro de cuentas que esta Mision de Santa Barbara tiene con la Habilitación de este presidio de el mismo nombre y otras varios particulares, 1794-1805, SBMA.

³¹⁹ Arrillaga to Tapis, Monterey, February 6, 1809, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³²⁰ Tapis to Arrillaga, San Carlos, February 10, 1809, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

the missionaries implied ownership of it which contradicted Franciscan canons and belied the communal ownership of the mission by resident neophytes.

While the response was short of overwhelming, evidence shows that at least two Fathers were willing to donate their annual stipends. Fathers Mariano Payeras and Geronimo Boscana wrote from Mission Purísima to the Procurator saying:

... the two fathers of this mission of Purísima Concepción in Alta California, undersigned, because of the grave present emergency of the Spanish Monarchy, for ourselves and in the name of all the neophytes who comprise this town, cede in your favor for only one time, the amount of our *sínodos* which is 400 pesos.³²¹

Contributions were solicited again in 1810, but no response appears to have been made. Tapis struggled with the same question that had evidently disturbed Lasuén; namely, how could the missionaries legitimately make donations when technically they owned nothing? Tapis left the problem to the consciences of the individual missionaries for resolution. Boscana and Payeras observed caution in stipulating that contributions were made in the name of the neophytes.

The inefficiency and sporadic nature of the San Blas supply service gave impetus to plans for civilian pueblos which were intended to supplement military supplies. For this purpose, San José de Guadalupe was established in November of 1776 near Mission Santa Clara. As potential competitors, the missionaries viewed the pueblos with suspicion. Serra soon expressed his misgivings to Viceroy Bucareli. The stated purpose of such settlements was to contribute provisions to the Royal warehouses, thereby relieving military dependency upon the supply service. Serra maintained this could have been better implemented by giving aid to the missions.³²² In this fashion the military supply problem would be solved and in doing so, the spiritual function of the missions would be enhanced. Serra quickly recognized the significance of future contracts for military supplies and predicted that either the missions or pueblos would survive, but not both since they were direct competitors. "Let these pueblos be established, well and good, if the authorities approve of the plan; and let the missions disappear," he said. In a letter to Teodoro de Croix he became eloquent and adamant.

Missions, my lord, missions—that is what this country needs. They will not only provide

³²¹ Payeras and Boscana to Viñals, Mission Purísima, March 28, 1809, AGN. Historia de Mexico. Primera Serie, Tomo 2. Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries*, II, 665-666 and Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 88. Both imply that no money contributions were made by the missions.

³²² Serra to Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa, Monterey, June 30, 1778, AGN. Bucareli, Tomo 113. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, IV, 194-201.

it with what is most important—the light of the Holy Gospel—but also will be the means of supplying foodstuffs for themselves and for the Royal Presidios. They will accomplish this far more efficiently than these pueblos without priests.³²³

Serra's entreaties, as might be expected, were in vain. Governor Felipe de Neve was in the process of formulating his new *Reglamento* which provided comprehensive regulations for the establishment of civilian settlements.³²⁴ The pueblos were to engage in tilling, planting, stock-raising and progressively in other areas of industry. In the course of a few years the hope was that their produce would suffice to supply the post garrisons with food and horses, thus relieving the Royal Treasury of these costs. Produce could be purchased from civilians at prices established for the province, but payment had to be discounted for coin, riding beasts, flocks, tools, seeds and other items advanced to them on credit by the Royal Treasury. Pursuant to the new regulations, Pueblo Los Angeles was founded in September of 1781 with forty-six persons, two of whom claimed to be of pure Spanish background. The third civilian settlement, Branciforte was founded in 1797 in hopes of stemming possible foreign invasion.³²⁵

Serra's fears were never realized since the pueblos never managed to compete effectively with the missions for the business of the presidios. Several problems plagued these first California towns: the inhabitants were often retrieved from the jails of Guadalajara; the missions regarded them as adversaries; no outside trade was allowed to stimulate production and an inability to compete with the Indian labor of the missions hampered effective competition. Instead of a real threat as envisioned by Serra, they became impotent irritants. In cases where civilian settlers had grain to sell, it was purchased by the presidios, but never in large enough quantities to seriously challenge the pre-eminent position held by the missions. It appeared to the missionaries that the civilian settlers were capable of nothing but games of chance, music and dancing, and chasing Indian women for immoral purposes. An ex-California missionary, Father Isidro Alonso Salazar, made his impressions clear to Viceroy Branciforte in May of 1796.

The two towns founded twenty years ago have made little progress. The residents are a group of laggards. The Indian is errand boy, cowboy and manual laborer for them—in

³²³ Serra to Teodoro de Croix, Monterey, August 22, 1778, AGN. Provincias Internas, Tomo 121. Trans. in *ibid.*, IV, 248-255.

³²⁴ Provisional Reglamento of Neve, Monterey, June 1, 1779. It bears the title: "Reglamento Provisional Para la Peninsula de Californias formado por su Gobernador el Coronel de Cavalleria Don Phelipe de Neve en virtud de superior orden, Año de 1779." AGN. Provincias Internas, Vol. 121. Trans. by Lummis, "Regulations and Instructions."

³²⁵ Branciforte, named for the Viceroy, was founded in the summer of 1797 with landless colonists from San José and Los Angeles together with vagrants and minor criminals from Guadalajara. Due to lack of funds and the character of the inhabitants, the settlement was gradually abandoned. See Bancroft, *History of California*, I, 564-571.

fact, general factotum. Confident that gentile Indians are working, the young men ride on horseback through the Indian villages, soliciting the women for immoral acts.³²⁶

Father José Señán, temporarily in Mexico, substantiated Salazar's account. The solution, he felt, was the introduction of a better sort of colonist. The settlers had little avocation for work and were more likely to be seen with a deck of cards than a plow and because they used Indians as laborers, they debased the native peoples.³²⁷ San José and Los Angeles were hardly worthy to be called towns for they remained formless and embryonic. The crux of the problem, Señán claimed, was the inability of the colonists to enjoy the fruits of their labor or to make a profit therefrom. "Their lack of interest in their work," he said, "should not be surprising, since they regard most of it as fruitless." The civilians were plagued with the same economic problem to which missions were subjected. Only one outlet for surpluses existed; sale to the military. Theoretically, the colonists were to purchase essential articles of Mexican manufacture from the presidio storehouses in return for agricultural products. In fact, desired items were seldom available or they were reserved for use by the troops. Available items were sold at exorbitant prices while settlers received a pittance for their produce.

The revolution of 1810 enhanced the significance of civilian and military dependence upon missions. Retired soldiers turned settler and colonists appear in mission accounts. For example, Pedro Cordero and José Roman, both settlers, appear in the account books of Mission Purísima. Evidently the pueblos often went in debt communally to the missions. A notation in the Purísima accounts in 1815 specified that the pueblo (presumably Los Angeles) owed the mission twenty-four pesos which was to be paid in cattle. Purchases were made by colonists and soldier settlers from a long list of goods including blankets, scarves, boots, cheese, saddles, flour, funeral shrouds, coffins, woolen and cotton cloth, cash, peas, beans, repair work, thread, shawls, brandy and Indian labor. Such items were frequently bartered for and paid in goods rather than in scarce cash. Missions often accepted eggs and lard on individual accounts as well as saddle frames and horses. These were hardly items lacking at the missions, but ones which could always be used profitably. As smuggling with foreign ships by missions grew after 1800 the missions became a source of cash. A servant, Patricio Pico, was advanced thirty-five pesos in

³²⁶ Fray Isidro Antonio Salazar to Viceroy Branciforte, Mexico, May 11, 1796, SBMA. Father Salazar arrived in California in 1791 and was assigned as one of the first two missionaries at Mission Santa Cruz by Lasuén. In 1775 he left California and was back at the College of San Fernando by March of 1796.

³²⁷ Father José Señán to the Viceroy, Mexico, May 14, 1796, SBMA. Señán interrupted his service in California with an interlude from 1796-1798 spent at the College of San Fernando. See Maynard Geiger, *Franciscan Missionaries in Hispanic California*, San Marino, 1969, 235-239.

1812 for ten young bulls and twenty-five steers to be delivered at some undetermined future date.³²⁸ Such transactions were typical after 1810 and indicate the integral and pervasive role played by the missions after 1800 and particularly after 1810.

Early in the history of Hispanic Alta California, the missions began to assume the role of supplying the military from agricultural surpluses. As early as the spring of 1774 San Gabriel harvested 110 fanegas of corn which enabled the mission guards of that mission and of San Diego to subsist until supplies arrived from San Blas. This mission, because of ideal climate and fertile lands, was the first to exhibit its future potential. In 1774, 90 fanegas of wheat were harvested, 240 of corn and 30 of beans. Production in 1775 was much the same, but in 1776, harvests declined except for corn which soared to 440 fanegas.³²⁹ Governor Rivera y Moncada recognized San Gabriel as a supply source in 1776 and let his thoughts be known to Viceroy Bucareli. The presidios were having difficulty raising crops and it appeared to him that San Gabriel could best be relied upon to aid the military without prejudice to Indian neophytes. Already the Monterey Presidio had borrowed grain from the mission.³³⁰ Fray Pedro Font, with the Anza expedition of 1776, testified to the flourishing agriculture at San Gabriel.³³¹

The 1780's saw an increase in exchanges between missions and presidios, although in an unorganized and haphazard fashion. In 1787 Father Guardian Palóu received a request from the Intendant General, Fernando Joseph Mangino, to deliver information on the ability of the missions to provide foodstuffs for the military. To increase Royal revenues, the Crown sought to reduce expenses by encouraging California's self-sufficiency. Mangino's request was accompanied by an order of Council of War and Exchequer that ordered Palóu to furnish details and give his opinion. Palóu enthusiastically accepted the scheme since it implied an informal contract with the military for agricultural supplies from the missions. It was an admission that plans for pueblos to function as military suppliers had failed. Serra's earlier fears that the missions would be ruined by civilian competition were being belatedly allayed. On November 21, 1787 Palóu wrote to Mangino surveying the production of the missions.

The aforementioned grains go to maintain the neophytes who are the only workmen and

³²⁸ Account book of Mission Purísima, 1806-1834. Transcribed by Lewis G. Thomas and Trans. by Lewis G. Thomas and Elmira Osuna. Berkeley, 1938. WPA Project, p. 143, SBMA.

³²⁹ Serra to Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa, Monterey, February 5, 1775, AGN. Provincias Internas, Tomo 166. Phs. SBMA.

³³⁰ Rivera y Moncada to Bucareli, San Diego, August 20, 1776. Private Collection, Mexico City. Phs. SBMA.

³³¹ Herbert E. Bolton, ed., *Font's Complete Diary*. Vol. IV. *Anza's California Expeditions*. 5 vols. Berkeley, 1930, p. 177.

laborers, and if any mission is not able to produce enough because of lack of water or another misfortune, they aid it immediately as sons and daughters of the same Father, who is God, with that with which they edify the new Christians, and the missions which produce a surplus, deliver it to the supply officers for the troops, in exchange for cloth to help clothe the Indians; but up to the present the missions are still not in position to help and provision so many people, but they have always helped according to the ability of each mission, each in its time is able to provide much help, would to God that the missions would be able to help the presidios at all times, by which great benefit would be brought to the King, eliminating, at least, the expense of maintaining one ship, since with only one they will be able to provide wearing apparel and implements for presidios and missions, which at present, because of scarcity of provisions, two ships have been necessary.³³²

Palóu went on to describe benefits that would accrue to both missions and presidios from mutually beneficial exchange. The presidios received good grains and seeds at bargain prices while missions got sufficient clothing for the Indians and tools and provisions for house and field. As an added bonus, the higher standard of living might attract more neophytes to the missions.

Palóu was willing to accept increased business from the military establishment, but at the same time he was reluctant to permanently commit any substantial portion of mission resources. Paramount in his consideration was the welfare of the neophytes. Only when they were well taken care of would he be willing to provision the military. Because of fears of drought or accidents of nature, mission sales to the government remained on an informal basis. Missions were free to sell supplies only when surpluses existed. Consequently, it must have been all but impossible for the military to obtain consistently adequate supplies since mission harvests could be anticipated, but not predicted in advance. The logistics of determining what quantities of supplies to order from Mexico beleaguered many supply officers. Exchange between mission and presidio continued in this unorganized fashion to the end of the Spanish period.

The following table provides a brief analysis of Mission San Carlos' economic relations with the Monterey Presidio. It is clear that with the exception of one year shown, balances were decidedly in favor of the mission. A total of 29,107 pesos were given by the presidio in favor of the mission, but to this must be added value of sales for years not shown. Sales in those years were covered by warrants since no balances were carried forward. The average sales for the years shown is slightly over 1,500 pesos. For the seven years not available that equals 10,500 pesos for total warrants of 39,607 pesos, over a period of thirty-four years. The figure, however, is hypothetical, as no warrants were paid in Mexico after 1809.

³³² Palóu to Mangino, Mexico, November 21, 1787, AGN. Misiones de la Alta California, Segunda serie, tomo 2. Transcript in SBMA.

Warrants paid before 1810 totaled more than 23,394 pesos which for the years in question yields an annual average of over 1063 pesos. Adding the annual stipend of 800 pesos, an approximation of annual revenue is 1863 pesos. This is substantially less than the actual figure since it does not include revenue from goods such as tallow sent to Mexico nor does it provide for revenue derived from illicit trade with foreigners. Inter-mission trade probably balanced and had little overall effect on annual revenue.

TABLE 9

DEBTS OF MONTEREY PRESIDIO TO
MISSION SAN CARLOS 1788-1821*

| | | | |
|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1788..... | 150p | 1805..... | 929p (929) |
| 1789..... | 127p | 1806..... | — |
| 1790..... | 1166p | 1807..... | 3400p (3400) |
| 1791..... | 1266p | 1808..... | 3829p (3829) |
| 1792..... | 1897p | 1809..... | — |
| 1793..... | 1404p | 1810..... | 1666p (1666) |
| 1794..... | 837p (2000) | 1811..... | 2101p (2101) |
| 1795..... | 1740p | 1812..... | — |
| 1796..... | 1333p (1200) | 1813..... | 1352p (1352) |
| 1797..... | 2996p | 1814..... | 1711p (1711) |
| 1798..... | 1321p (2873) | 1815..... | — |
| 1799..... | 656p agst m. | 1816..... | 1802p (1802) |
| 1800..... | 904p | 1817..... | 1367p (1367) |
| 1801..... | 1663p (1663) | 1818..... | 723p (723) |
| 1802..... | — | 1819..... | 2491p (2491) |
| 1803..... | — | 1820..... | 442p |
| 1804..... | — | 1821..... | 1705p |

* Amounts are given to the nearest peso. Blanks indicate no information available. Amounts are calculated after mission purchases from the presidio have been deducted. Balances include previous year's balances unless warrants were issued, in which cases balances undergo wide fluctuation. Amounts in parentheses are amounts given in warrants in that year. The figures are derived from Account of the *Habilitado* of Monterey with Mission San Carlos, Monterey, for the years cited, AASF. Phs. in SBMA.

From the previous table it is clear that the balance of trade between mission and presidio was decidedly in favor of the mission, but this must not be misconstrued as implying that the trade was not to a limited extent reciprocal. Trade goods sold by the presidial storehouses consisted mainly of luxury items produced in New Spain or Spain. In most instances, items purchased were needed by missions because of lack of space for shipment on transport vessels, underestimated needs, or lack of exchange to pay for them when orders were sent to Mexico. That the military supplied only

limited quantities of luxury goods is easily explainable. Economic production was not a function of the military, although attempts at stock raising and agriculture were made. Anything the military produced in California was easily duplicated and even surpassed by the missions, usually at less cost because of economies of scale. Missions had recourse to the military for luxury items only when their own supplies from Mexico proved deficient, although tobacco was an exception since it was a royal monopoly. Mission purchases from the presidio storehouses were supplemental rather than integral to the mission economy.

Products sold in presidio stores were not produced in the province and were not subject to provincial price regulations. Their prices were determined by cost at San Blas, subject to variation according to changes in costs of production and transportation in addition to supply and demand. Tobacco, controlled by a royal monopoly designed by José de Gálvez to produce revenue for the Crown, was an exception and its price was set by the government. The *Habilitado* of Monterey administered the monopoly for which he was allowed 545 pesos annually while *Habilitados* at other presidios received 5 percent of gross sales. Annual revenue from the sale of cigars, cigaritos and snuff consistently exceeded 4,000 pesos of which a substantial amount was purchased by the missionaries who were particularly addicted to snuff. In 1806 José de la Guerra was administrator of the tobacco monopoly and for a six month period reported sales of 7,943 packages of cigars, 30,488 of cigaritos and 6½ pounds of snuff, with a total valuation of 2419 pesos, 6 reales.³³³ Apparently missions located in proximity to presidios purchased small quantities as needed; perhaps three pesos worth every two months.³³⁴ At the end of each six month period total sales were determined and a warrant on the *Habilitado General* payable to the treasury at Guadalajara was sent to Mexico.

Administration of the mails was a second service rendered by the *Habilitado* to the missionary. While no charge was made on letters dealing with official business written by the missionaries, all personal letters had to be posted. Revenue derived from this source was substantially less than that produced by the tobacco monopoly. The *Habilitados* served as postmasters at their respective presidios and were compensated with 8 percent of gross receipts.³³⁵ The standard postage charge

³³³ Relación jurada que yo el teniente Don José de la Guerra como administrador de la Renta de tabacos de las Presidios de la Nueva California doy a la Contaduría de la misma Renta de la Ciudad de Guadalajara que lo perteneciente a los seis Meses de este año de 1806 que han sido a mi cargo, Monterey, n.d., 1806, SBMA.

³³⁴ See, for example, Account of the *Habilitado* of Monterey with Mission San Carlos, by Joseph Francisco Ortega, Monterey, December 31, 1788, AASF. Phs. in SBMA. Also Bancroft, *History of California*, I, 633.

³³⁵ Bancroft, *History of California*, I, 633.

for each letter was three reales, with the amount entered in the presidio account with the mission along with tobacco charges.³³⁶

Prices on other items varied widely according to time, place and their quality, which is now indeterminate. Appended below is a list of those items frequently appearing in accounts.³³⁷ There is nothing outstanding about these items. All, or substitutes for them, could easily have been purchased by the missions themselves in Mexico. Presidios served as back-up sources of supply for those items which for a variety of reasons missions ran short of. Also evident in the accounts, as discussed in a previous chapter, were transfers between missions in settlement of debts. Payments went to other missions through presidio accounts in settlement of accounts.

TABLE 10
ITEMS FREQUENTLY PURCHASED BY
MISSIONS FROM PRESIDIOS

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| chile | British cloth | panocha |
| iron | Puebla plates | paper |
| adzes | axes | nails |
| coarse cotton | gunpowder | shrimp |
| metal platina | black silk thread | mescal |
| wool cards | wax tapers | fine towels |
| chocolate | wine | cloth from Jalapa |
| razors | soap | white canvas |
| Gallegan shoes | English axes | catechisms |
| silk thread | willow baskets | wool |
| | gunflint | |

Trade in the opposite direction from mission to presidio was much more extensive and performed an ever increasing role in providing the military with essentials. The list of items supplied encompassed every item produced by the missions of Alta California, including such diverse items as foodstuffs and clothing, weapons and Indian labor. The trade remained uneventful until after 1810 when the military, deprived of salaries and supplies from Mexico, began to extract what they could from the mission economy. The missionary Fathers, zealous for the welfare of their neophytes, supplied only what they felt was compatible with their primary

³³⁶ See, for example, Account of the *Habilitado* of Monterey with Mission San Carlos, by Hermenegildo Sal, Monterey, December 31, 1799, AASF. Phs. SBMA., and Account of the *Habilitado* of Monterey with Mission San Carlos, José Estrada, Monterey, December 31, 1811, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³³⁷ The list is a composite from Account of the *Habilitado* of Monterey with Mission San Carlos, Monterey, 1788-1821, AASF. Phs. SBMA. Gunpowder was one of the few items with a standardized price which in this case was one peso per arroba.

function of Christianizing Indians. Undoubtedly, during this period rumors of vast wealth hidden by the missionaries began to spread. The military in straitened circumstances could hardly have understood the unwillingness of the Fathers to subordinate what they considered legal possessions of the Indians to the immediate needs of the troops. Although the missionaries were managers of a diversified economic cooperative, they had no means to store wealth since the supply of money was limited. Hoarding requires a vehicle stable in value and non-deteriorating, such as precious metals or another unit of universally accepted value. There was potential wealth in the form of drafts on the treasury for goods supplied to the military which, however, were never realized. The alleged wealth of the California missions existed only on paper and only as long as there was hope for government payment. To avoid what they felt would be certain rape, the missionaries refused to reveal their exact assets to military authorities.

By 1820 grievances between presidio and mission peaked and Governor Solá pressed the Commissary Prefect, Fray Mariano Payeras, for exact information on mission economy. He demanded exact and punctual statements, including invoices, accounts and lists of goods entering and leaving the missions in addition to inventories and explanations of investments. Solá, Payeras was certain, had presented his innovations to higher authority for approval and in order to obtain justice, he presented his objections to the College of San Fernando in hope that they might be heard by the government.

In his lengthy letter to the Father Guardian, Payeras reiterated the ancient Franciscan refrain, saying that mission assets were a common fund belonging to the Indians.³³⁸ The rest of the letter was an excellent summary of services and goods rendered to the presidios since 1810. The missions under the direction of the Fathers supported the neophytes and the troops from 1810 without payment of any warrants or stipends. The troops were kept in grain, clothing and money to the extent of a half million pesos, as shown in drafts drawn or owed. This was not accompanied with accusations of mismanagement or misappropriation nor with any elaborate and time consuming rendering of accounts which would burden the old and overworked missionaries beyond their capabilities. There had been no reluctance, he continued, on the part of the missions to supply what they could to the troops when requests were properly and

³³⁸ Fray Mariano Payeras to Reverend Father Guardian and Venerable Discretario, Mission San Antonio, June 18, 1821, SBMA. Solá's recommendations and Payeras' objections soon became moot for on September 28, 1821 the "trigarantine" army formally entered Mexico City and a five man regency was set up headed by Agustín de Iturbide; Mexico was independent and Hispanic California merged into Mexican California.

formally made through correct channels. In 1820, Payeras received requests for 3000 pesos for the artillery arsenal, 800 head of cattle for the Presidio of San Francisco, and an advance of 6,000 pesos to purchase items for the comfort of the troops. As Commissary Prefect, he apportioned requisitions among the missions on the basis of information at his disposal. Each mission then fulfilled its quota to the best of its ability. In proof of the goodwill of the missions he claimed:

The missions give what they have, requested through the regular channel of their prelate, on the petition of the Señor Governor; the more than half a million pesos in the four *Habilitado's* offices, of which some have already given drafts and others have not is incontestable proof.³³⁹

The missions were not rich and kept only enough cash to meet current expenses. Indignant at Solá's implication of peculation on the part of the missionaries, Payeras maintained that:

The major part of our missions have in currency no more than a hundred to one thousand pesos. Of three or four of them, they will barely reach four thousand, all of which they need for their daily management, wages of majordomo, opportune purchases, requests from this government, drafts for their shipments and because it is fitting for a well arranged and prudent economy to remember tomorrow today; nevertheless if it were known to who is longing to acquire them it would be the greatest scandal and he would not cease to beg until he had left their owners who have labored so much for them without a cent.³⁴⁰

If, Payeras warned, one calculated how much each Indian would receive if the assets of the missions were divided up, it would be very little. With one word from higher authority the missionaries would give up management of the temporal affairs of the missions, but in the meantime, Payeras complained, it was unjust for others to criticize and despise the Fathers for the way in which affairs were conducted. In his estimation, they had not done badly. The missions prospered, Indians were being converted and the needs of the military were taken care of.

The volume of trade from mission to presidio underwent a predictable, but gradual increase throughout the years of Spanish California. The needs of presidios increased at the same time as the ability of missions to supply them. New missions and increasing productivity of mature ones conjoined to increase labor supply, harvests and products of skilled labor. Of all items supplied to presidios, none became more significant than Indian labor. Neophytes were frequently hired from the missions for all types of duties ranging from servant, field hand, adobe maker, and skilled artisans such as carpenters and blacksmiths. In return the Indian received

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

food, clothing and a small wage which was credited to the mission account at the presidio.

Pay for Indian labor frequently appears in accounts. Wages for an unskilled neophyte evidently became standardized at 2 reales per day plus clothing and food, although there are many instances in which it was reduced to 1½ reales. In 1799 Indians were loaned by Mission Santa Barbara for 2 reales per day while in 1804 a contract was made by the Santa Barbara Presidio for six Indians who were to receive only 1½ reales per day.³⁴¹ The compensation was determined in most cases simply by what the contractor would pay. Neophytes with skills were paid more. A mason, for example, might get four reales per day, as one did at Santa Barbara in 1807. A young Indian neophyte was paid as little as one real per day. At times a neophyte might be hired out with equipment, in which case the missions received compensation for use of the equipment as well as worker. In 1807 Mission Santa Barbara loaned the presidio a neophyte with a mule who was to be engaged in moving stones. Compensation was fixed at three reales per day for both man and mule.³⁴² Indians were hired for all types of repair work at the presidios, work in the Governor's orchard and cutting tule.³⁴³ Individuals hired laborers from the missions for the same chores and at rates determined in the same fashion. At times, expenditures for labor reached substantial amounts. José Francisco Ortega rendered a separate account of what the Presidio of Monterey owed Mission San Carlos for wages in only the space of a few months.³⁴⁴ The total was 127 pesos, 2 reales at the rate of 1½ reales per day per man. The presidio had used 677 man hours. As the Spanish conquest progressed, gentile Indians became more difficult to find and neophyte labor assumed significant proportions.

Repugnance toward manual labor was as evident in California as elsewhere. Neophytes imprisoned at presidios were used for labor, while many civilians hired Indians, both gentile and neophyte, to farm for them, and in return gave them a half or third of the crop. Employment of neophyte labor apparently began a decline after 1810. Charges for neophyte laborers were a common occurrence in the accounts of Mission Santa Barbara before 1810, but in the accounts covering 1816-1822 the incidence declines. While accounts may have not been as carefully kept after 1810 because of the remote possibility of payment, it is explainable

³⁴¹ Libro de quantas que esta Mision de Santa Barbara tiene con la Habilitación de este presidio de el mismo nombre y otros various particulares, Mission Santa Barbara, 1794-1805, SBMA.

³⁴² Book of Accounts of Mission Santa Barbara, Mission Santa Barbara, 1805-1807, SBMA.

³⁴³ Monterey Presidio Account, signed by José Francisco Ortega, Monterey, December 31, 1788, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³⁴⁴ Monterey Presidio Account, signed by José Francisco Ortega, Monterey, October 20, 1789, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

by the depressed state of military finances. This is borne out by the partial disappearance from accounts of items other than basic necessities. Employment of neophytes declined, but so did purchases of soap, leather goods and repairs. Throughout the Spanish period, but particularly during the peak years from 1800-1810, wages for laborers formed a significant portion of income for those missions located near presidios.

Table 11 is a list of items most frequently sold or donated by missions to the troops. On those items produced locally the provincial tariff or lower prices were generally adhered to. Many of the goods not produced in California were purchased by the missions from foreign vessels. However, the list does underscore the ability of the missions to provide all necessities of life and testifies to the reliance of the military upon them.³⁴⁵

TABLE 11

SUPPLIES SOLD BY MISSIONS TO PRESIDIOS

FOODSTUFFS SOLD BY MISSIONS
TO THE MILITARY

| | | |
|-----------|----------------|--------------------|
| bread | cigars | jelly |
| cheese | rice | peas |
| flour | sugar | tomatoes |
| peas | corn | chile |
| lard | chick-peas | garlic |
| beef | white beans | pears |
| mutton | wheat | potatoes |
| milk cows | hog lard | butter |
| chocolate | brandy | piñon nuts |
| mescal | tallow | salt |
| soap | apples | venison |
| wine | oats | various vegetables |
| tobacco | <i>panocha</i> | candles |
| | lima beans | |

CLOTHING SOLD BY MISSIONS
TO THE MILITARY

| | | |
|--------------|--------------------|------------|
| shoes | woolen cloth | sheepskins |
| kerchiefs | shawls | blankets |
| boots | silk | deerskins |
| buckles | thread | sackcloth |
| half boots | serapes | sombreros |
| trousers | socks | flannel |
| sole leather | shepherds blankets | cowhides |
| cotton cloth | gold thread | |

³⁴⁵ The following information was gleaned from a number of sources. Accounts of the *Habilitado* of Monterey with Mission San Carlos, Monterey, 1788-1821, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

TABLE 11—*Continued*EQUIPMENT SOLD BY MISSIONS
TO THE MILITARY

| | | |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| packsaddles | horse blankets | saddle pads |
| reins | saddle trees | bridles |
| halters | stirrups | harnesses |
| saddles | breast plates | spurs |
| whips | rump covers | |

ARMAMENT AND EQUIPMENT SOLD BY
MISSIONS TO THE MILITARY

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| lances | leggings | flints |
| lance tips | knife sheaths | springs |
| lance sheaths | cartridge cases | oval shields |
| leather jackets | leather sacks | leather rainproofs |
| (5 ply) | gunsights | |

LIVESTOCK SOLD BY MISSIONS
TO THE MILITARY

| | | |
|--------|-------|-----------|
| horses | oxen | bulls |
| hogs | sheep | milk cows |
| goats | mules | chickens |
| burros | cows | |

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS SOLD BY
MISSIONS TO THE MILITARY

| | | |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| chairs | tumblers | cushions |
| sleeping mats | bottles | funeral shrouds |
| flasks | burlap sacks | wick |
| knapsacks | rope | coffins |
| spoons | plates | candles |
| twine | keys | mattresses |
| iron | adzes | paper |
| hoops & staves | bolts & locks | |

Frequently the Fathers were called upon by both settlers and troops to say Masses for a special intention or for a deceased relative or friend. The

Accounts of Mission Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, 1794-1805, 1805-1808, 1813-1815, 1816-1822, SBMA. Account Book of Mission Purísima, 1806-1834. Transcribed by Lewis G. Thomas and translated by Elmira Osuna and Lewis G. Thomas, Berkeley, 1938. Fray Jayme Escude to Governor Solá, Santa Cruz, November 26, 1818, AASF. Phs. SBMA. Fray Estevan Tapis to Governor Solá, San Juan Bautista, November 17, 1818, AASF. Phs. SBMA. Tapis to Solá, San Juan Bautista, October 2, 1818, AASF. Phs. SBMA. Fray José Viader to Solá, Santa Clara, September 15, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA. Fray Juan Bautista Sancho to Solá, San Antonio, September 2, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA. Fray Juan Cabot to Solá, San Miguel, August 19, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

standard charge was one peso for a low mass or as high as ten pesos for a chanted one. Considerable revenue accrued to the missions from this source.

From the point at which a mission became agriculturally self-sufficient it was usual for its *escolta* or guard to cease drawing rations from the presidial store and to substitute mission products. Previously the *Habilitado* had provided rations which were stored separately at the mission and the missionaries were in charge of their distribution and reported exactly what had been consumed by each soldier to the *Habilitado* who charged it against the individual's wages. Once missions were able to supply food for soldiers of the guard, a similar procedure was followed. Careful records were kept of supplies rendered to the guard. Periodically the charges were transferred to the *Habilitado* who credited the total to the mission's account at the presidio and deducted it from the soldier's wages. The standard number of men employed as mission guards was six per mission; five soldiers and a corporal. Yearly charges for their maintenance ranged from 77 to 117 pesos. The Monterey presidio was charged 117 pesos, 5 reales for rations subministered to the *escolta* by Mission San Carlos in 1791. In 1801 only 77 pesos worth of supplies were given to the same *escolta*.³⁴⁶ Not willing to forgive a peso spent on their own protection, charges were made against *Habilitados* for the pasturage and grain consumed by the mounts and pack animals belonging to soldiers assigned to missions. In 1789 Mission San Carlos charged the *Habilitado* of Monterey 6 pesos, 3 reales for the maintenance of animals.³⁴⁷

As missions became able, it became customary for them to provision supply ships with stores for the return voyage to San Blas. As in the case of supplies for the troops this chore fell most heavily upon missions located in the proximity of the four ports: San Diego, Santa Barbara, Monterey and San Francisco. Supplies for ships consisted mainly of foodstuffs which were charged to the appropriate *Habilitación* in accordance with the province price schedule. Supplies to foreign vessels putting into California ports for provisions were also charged to presidio accounts. The burden of collecting payment for supplies rendered and bearing the risk of default by foreign vessels was the responsibility of the military. The value of supplies furnished to vessels, Spanish and foreign, varied widely depending on size of ship and crew and length of voyage. Supplies included salt, steers, candles, chickens, lard and all types of grains and vegetables. For example, the

³⁴⁶ Account of the *Habilitado* of Monterey with Mission San Carlos, Signed by José Argüello, Monterey, December 31, 1791, AASF. Phs. SBMA. Account of the *Habilitado* of Monterey with Mission San Carlos, signed by Raymundo Carrillo, Monterey, December 31, 1789, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³⁴⁷ Account of the *Habilitado* for Monterey with Mission San Carlos, signed by José Ortega, Monterey, December 31, 1789, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

Monterey accounts credit Mission San Carlos in 1796 for 24 pesos, 4 reales for supplies given to the "American frigate."³⁴⁸ In 1801 Mission Santa Barbara was credited with 187 pesos, one real worth of goods given to the supply ships "Princess" and "Concepción," including eighteen steers, candles, chickens and lard.³⁴⁹

All supplies needed by the military could obviously not be procured at the missions after the end of the government support and supply service in 1810. The *Habilitados*' offices at the four presidios remained in an untenable position. They had neither cash nor did they produce items of value such as iron, brandy, gunpowder, tobacco and fine cloth. It was the missions that filled the void. Tallow was a valuable trade item much in demand, while lard and hemp were used for the same purpose in lesser quantities. Accounts do not note for what purpose tallow, lard and hemp were being purchased by the military, however, the quantities far exceeded domestic demand. That purchases were being made for resale is substantiated by the upsurge in tallow, lard and hemp going from missions to presidios after 1810 which was precisely when the presidios were forced to find an alternate source of supply. The *Habilitados*, instead of allowing debts owed to them by missions to be cancelled by debts incurred by the troops, began to demand payment in saleable commodities. In 1811 Mission Purísima owed the *Habilitación* at Santa Barbara 605 pesos, 5 reales which normally would have simply been applied against the presidio's running account with the mission. Instead payment was demanded in lard. The mission, however, insisted that the debt be discounted at a substantial rate. The 605 peso, 5 real debt was to be satisfied with only 200 arrobas of lard at 9 reales and another 100 arrobas at 8 reales. The debt was to be cancelled for 325 pesos worth of lard.³⁵⁰ The discrepancy is not as large as it first appears since the normal price of lard was not 8 or 9 reales but 12 reales, or more per arroba.

It was more common for tallow or lard to be requisitioned by the *Habilitado* and to be charged to the presidio account with the mission. Tallow required for trade with the Russians and Lima ships apparently

³⁴⁸ Account of the *Habilitado* of Monterey with Mission San Carlos, signed by José Pérez Fernández, Monterey, December 31, 1896. The American frigate was the "Otter" under Captain Ebenezer Dorr. This visit is of special significance since it represents the arrival of the first Boston vessel in Hispanic California. The ship had collected 1,000 otter skins on the Northwest Coast and was taking them to China via Hawaii. She was provisioned in California with 187 pesos worth of goods; 8 cows, 1000 pounds of meal, rice, beans, butter, tallow, and vegetables. For further light on this interesting topic, see Adele Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade 1784-1848*, Berkeley, 1939, 32-33.

³⁴⁹ Libro de cuentas que esta Mision de Santa Barbara tiene con la *Habilitación* de este presidio de el mismo nombre y otros varios particulares, 1794-1805, SBMA.

³⁵⁰ Account Book of Mission Purísima, 1806-1834. Transcribed by Lewis G. Thomas and translated by Elmira Osuna and Lewis G. Thomas, Berkeley, 1938, 39.

was willingly provided down to 1817 when Governor Solá irritated the missionaries with a call for one ton of tallow for each of the presidios to be traded with the Lima ships for the benefit of the troops. Father Durán wrote a complaining letter to the Procurator at the College of San Fernando.³⁵¹ A general meeting was held at Mission San Buenaventura in which the Governor had outlined his demands. Allowances for the four presidios, he told the Fathers, had to come from the province itself to save royal funds. This was an absurdity, Durán felt, since it placed an impossible burden of 100,000 pesos per year upon the missions. Furthermore, said Durán, the Governor had asked for more than 16,000 arrobas of tallow from the missions which was equal in value to 24,000 pesos. "I don't know," the beleaguered Father admitted, "what will be left." The original demand was reduced by the Prefect Sarría to a donation of 2800 pesos which could be paid either in cash or tallow. On September 23, 1818, Father Sarría sent a circular letter to the missions informing them of the amounts each was being assessed.³⁵² The amounts asked of each mission throw light on Sarría's estimation of the economic status of each mission. San Francisco, Santa Clara, San José, Santa Cruz, San Carlos, Soledad, San Antonio and San Diego were each assessed 50 pesos; San Juan Bautista, San Miguel, Santa Barbara and San Luis Rey, 100 pesos; San Fernando, 150 pesos, San Luis Obispo and Santa Inés, 200 pesos each; Purísima paid 300 pesos; San Juan Capistrano, 350 pesos, while San Buenaventura and San Gabriel were to contribute 400 pesos each. Many of the missions chose to pay in cash which was becoming less scarce due to increasing outside trade. Father Payeras of Mission Purísima responded by delivering 300 pesos in silver to José de la Guerra who acted as Friar's Syndic.

The accounts of Mission Santa Barbara for 1816 provide an index to the quantities of tallow and lard sold to presidios. In that year the mission sold a total of 213 arrobas of lard and 11 of tallow to the presidio.³⁵³ Other examples suggest that in 1816 both tallow and lard were being sold at 12 reales per arroba. At that rate, Mission Santa Barbara sold 336 pesos worth of lard and tallow to the *Habilitado*. By 1819 the price of lard, because of increasing demand, inflated to two pesos per arroba. In 1819 Mission San Carlos supplied twenty-five arrobas of lard to the presidio of

³⁵¹ Father Narciso Durán to Father Procurator, Mission San José, October 15, 1817. Manuscript Collections in the California Historical Society Library. In Francis Price, trans., "Letters of Narciso Duran," *CHSQ*, Vol. 37, 1958, 246.

³⁵² Sarría to the Missionaries from Soledad to San Diego, San Juan Bautista, September 23, 1818, SBMA. Also see Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 217.

³⁵³ Accounts of Mission Santa Barbara, 1816-1822, SBMA.

Monterey for 50 pesos. The lard was sold and the proceeds were to repair fire damage to the presidio.³⁵⁴

Requisitions for staples, trade goods, Indian labor and repair work by the military from the missions became common. The gradual conversion of the missions to a money economy led to frequent requests for cash after 1810. Missions' supplies to the military were totally dependent upon the prosperity of the missions. The documentation reflects that contributions, both in cash and kind, were given by the missions and were never entered in account books and consequently no payment was expected. In 1814 lack of provisions at the San Diego and Santa Barbara presidios occasioned requests of aid in cash. Four thousand pesos were asked for Santa Barbara and 3,200 for San Diego. Señán wrote to the missions in the Santa Barbara district begging each to contribute 800 pesos.³⁵⁵ Each evidently contributed the requested donation. A second letter to the missions of the San Diego district asked for 800 pesos from each to relieve the needs of the troops.³⁵⁶ Only mission San Gabriel declined. Fathers José María Zalvidea and Joaquín Pasqual Nuez claimed their inability to pay on the basis of a contract for supplies with one of the Lima ships for which they were to pay cash.³⁵⁷ However, they promised to contribute in kind such items as meat, brandy, tobacco and produce. In payment of these donations there was no obvious rancor on the part of the missionaries.

Correspondence between missionary and soldier during the period suggests an attitude of amicability rather than the animosity so often suggested. Conflict does not seem to have been the norm even in this time of stress. In 1816 Fray Luís Antonio Martínez wrote to Governor Solá sending him a patriotic donation of 200 pesos, blankets, saddles and horses.³⁵⁸ In 1819 Father Ramón Olbés wrote to Father Payeras from Mission Santa Cruz informing Payeras that he was not able to provide all of the supplies requested but that he was willing to give 175 pesos which was all he had at the time.³⁵⁹ In the same year Father Payeras received a letter of commendation from Governor Solá.

Concerning the supplication which you made to the nineteen missions in regard to the

³⁵⁴ Account of the *Habilitado* of Monterey with Mission San Carlos, signed by José Joaquín Torre, Monterey, December 31, 1819, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³⁵⁵ Señán to the Missionaries from San Fernando to Purísima, San Buenaventura, September 2, 1814, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³⁵⁶ Señán to the Missionaries from San Gabriel to San Diego, San Buenaventura, September 21, 1814, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³⁵⁷ Señán to the Missionaries from San Gabriel to San Diego, San Buenaventura, September 21, 1814, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³⁵⁸ Fray Luís Antonio Martínez to Solá, San Luis Obispo, January 17, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³⁵⁹ Father Ramón Olbés to Payeras, Santa Cruz, June 22, 1819, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

duty of making a donation to the troops in the name of the communities of neophytes, I notice with particular pleasure the list which the cadet and *Habilitado* of the company of Monterey, Don Joaquín de la Torre, has shown me, making a total of 3,633 pesos, 4 reales by which the danger caused by the insurgents to the company has been overcome.³⁶⁰

Payeras conformed with another request for 3,000 pesos from Governor Solá in 1821. A circular letter was sent to all of the missions from San Antonio to San Diego.³⁶¹ Eleven missions responded affirming their resolve to contribute what was necessary. A similar circular to missionaries from Soledad to San Francisco elicited a favorable response. Soledad and Santa Clara had only twenty-three pesos and twenty-five respectively which they could give, but the rest agreed to provide the quota assigned. Father Durán at Mission San José could give only fifty pesos. Father Viader at Santa Clara wrote a personal letter to Governor Solá explaining that he had only twenty-five pesos, but that if it was absolutely necessary, he would try to find the other 125 pesos of the quota assigned.³⁶²

An almost constant stream of supplies must have been kept moving along the rough roads in squeaking *carretas*. From the southern missions of San Diego, San Luis Rey, San Juan Capistrano and San Gabriel an estimated 25 fanegas of maize, 5½ of beans and 16 arrobas of lard went to the presidio of San Diego weekly. Annually this amounted to 1300 fanegas of maize, 286 of beans and 832 arrobas of lard. Extra rations were provided for prisoners held at the presidio. Missions provided harnesses used for the *requea*, a string of carts and mules used to transfer supplies. Governor Solá, pressed by the needs of his troops, especially after the Bouchard invasion, asked too much of the missionaries in 1819 when he attempted to quarter troops upon them. Protests were vociferous and the practice was discontinued.

Lower California also felt the pinch caused by the chaos in Mexico from 1810 to 1821. The missions of Baja California could not even eke out provisions for themselves much less support the troops in this emergency. The Alta California missions succored both the missions and troops to the south. In 1815 Father Sarría wrote to the missionaries soliciting alms of cattle, mules, grain, coarse cloth for Mission San Francisco de Borja in Lower California.³⁶³ Supplies from the southern mission went

³⁶⁰ Solá to Payeras, San Juan Bautista, June 27, 1819, SBMA. He is referring to the invasion of the Argentine insurgents under Hippolyte Bouchard which attacked Monterey in November of 1818. Monterey was sacked and buildings, including the presidio, were burned.

³⁶¹ Payeras to the Missionaries from San Antonio to San Diego, Soledad, January 10, 1821, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³⁶² Father Viader to Solá, Santa Clara, January 22, 1821, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

³⁶³ Sarría to Missionaries from Soledad to San Diego, Mission San Carlos, September 25, 1815, SBMA.

overland, while those from the north were shipped from Monterey. The missions responded with mules, cloth and chickens. Others promised whatever was needed by their Dominican brethern. In 1818 Mission Purísima was called upon to supply the *Habilitado* at Loreto. In September, Purísima delivered weapons, cushions, knapsacks, packsaddles, horse blankets and sackcloth for which the mission was credited at the Santa Barbara presidio³⁶⁴

In a situation which presented problems which could have easily lead to constant disharmony between military and religious officials, pleasantries continued to be exchanged. It would seem incredible that conflict was not more frequent and widespread and that Alta California was not divided into two opposing camps. Presents, marks of courtesy and esteem, and numerous letters went between military and clergy promising apples, pears, tomatoes, chiles, venison, piñon nuts and delicacies such as tender young goats. The Fathers also made gifts of choice wines and products of their orchards and gardens.

A document written by Father Mariano Payeras in 1820 neatly sums up the relations of Mission Purísima with the Presidio at Santa Barbara during the decade from 1810 to 1820.³⁶⁵ In the first place, he said, the mission which had received no compensation since 1810 had, upon the request of the Governor, delivered as much cash as it was able to the *Habilitación* at Santa Barbara. In grain and with its own supply carts it had delivered the greater part of what the *Comandante* of Santa Barbara had requested. The mission's looms had provided annually most of the clothing needed by the troops: blankets, serge, sackcloth and woolen cloth. The mission had, he claimed, maintained the mission guard completely, furnishing saddles for their horses and often clothing from mission stock. The Fathers had helped in every way possible and provided shoes for the greater part of the company. The truth of his claims was substantiated, Payeras said, by the drafts drawn against the *Habilitación* in favor of Purísima.

The three presidios of Monterey, Loreto, and San Francisco, he continued, had been provided with some items which they requested and Monterey had been supplied with workers and tools for restoration. During and after the Bouchard invasion the entire mission had been at the disposal of the government; provisions, beasts of burden, horses and other items necessary for defense. Nothing available, including neophytes, was spared. The Indians took up lances and bows and joined the defense being

³⁶⁴ Account Book of Mission Purísima, 1806-1834. Transcribed by Lewis G. Thomas and translated by Elmira Osuna and Lewis G. Thomas, Berkeley, 1938, 48-49.

³⁶⁵ Payeras to the Father Guardian, Mission la Purísima, July 3, 1820, AGN. Historia de Mexico, Primera serie, Tomo 2.

TABLE 12

DRAFTS IN FAVOR OF MISSION PURÍSIMA
1809-1819

| | <i>Pesos</i> | <i>Reales</i> | <i>Granos*</i> |
|--------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1809 | 2,171 | 7 | 9 |
| 1810 | 2,149 | 5 | 7 |
| 1811 | 3,183 | 7 | 7 |
| 1813 | 2,364 | 5 | 10 |
| 1819 | 10,688 | 4 | 4 |
| Totals | 20,558 | 6 | 3 |

* One peso equals 8 reales which equals 96 granos.

made by Sergeant Carlos Carrillo against the enemy who were attacking the *Rancho del Refugio*. Neophytes aided in moving the belongings of the troops and civilians to huts built for them about half a league away without pay of any kind. Many times the mail service, usually provided by the government, had been provided by the neophytes efficiently both alone and accompanied by soldiers always on animals belonging to the mission and maintained by them with no payment of any kind. Without regard for payment the mission had also clothed many civilians from the small supply which remained in its warehouse.

The experience of Mission Purísima was by no means unique. In 1820, Father Prefect Payeras directed a circular letter to the missionaries requesting information on what each mission had supplied for the military. The replies of several of the missions, including San Gabriel, are extant. Father Joaquín Pascual Nuez's reply from San Gabriel is particularly complete.³⁶⁶ In 1814, he replied, over 1,000 pesos worth of cloth had gone to the troops at San Diego and other vassals of the King, and in succeeding years the mission had supplied blankets, woolen goods and a variety of other items. In 1816 and 1817 the Fathers supplied not only inhabitants in their own jurisdiction, but those of all four presidios with 5,000 pesos worth of foreign goods bought with cash supplied by the mission and not only items such as grain, tallow and soap produced domestically. All this was necessary because of the extreme want prevalent in the province. As an example of poverty and the motives which compelled charity, Father Nuez described the situation at the Pueblo of Los Angeles.

³⁶⁶ Father Joaquín Pascual Nuez to Father Prefect Mariano Payeras, San Gabriel, June 5, 1820, HL. Stearns, Gaffey, McPherson, Monterey, Vallejo and California File Collection. Phs. SBMA.

For the families of the Pueblo of Los Angeles did not come to mass because they were nearly naked and we were the sorry observers of their want, and even the older girls went without shirts for lack of them and with no way of obtaining any.

From 1817 through 1819, 12,000 pesos or more of products from the mission were furnished to troops and civilians alike. Father Nuez continued by reminding Payeras:

No mention need be made of the continued succor to the troops of his majesty in Lower California, furnished not only at the instance of our prelates but by the ministers themselves, so moved by compassion, that they have remarked that this mission was the handkerchief that wiped their crying need.

Pressure upon the mission economy after 1810 to satisfy all necessities of life encouraged specialization by each individual establishment. The end of supplies and salaries deprived both missions and military of shipments from Mexico. This forced the military, as has been discussed, to turn to missions as a source of supply which in turn stimulated missions to meet this new demand; however, it also forced missions to turn to each other. Climate, skill, geography and accidents of development determined that not all missions could produce the same items at reasonable cost and of good quality. Some missions were particularly adept at production of leather goods. Others had good wheat crops, excellent orchards or plentiful livestock. This interchange between missions was not entirely new. It had been customary for a mission in need to appeal to its nearest neighbor for aid. Likewise, once missions developed surpluses, they were called upon to support the foundation of a new mission until it was self-supporting. Specialization and exchange between missions did not reach its peak until after 1810. The accounts of Mission Purísima exhibit extensive exchange with other missions and a high degree of specialization. Although not the most productive mission, it was by no means poor and its stock of cattle, sheep and production of wheat and corn were among the best. According to the report on the mission drawn up by Father Mariano Payeras at the end of 1818 the mission herds included 9,000 head of cattle and 12,000 head of sheep.³⁶⁷ In that year it harvested 3,000 fanegas of wheat and 1,000 of corn.

By 1821 totals had risen considerably with the exception of corn and sheep. Herds included 11,000 cattle which was exceeded at only four other missions and 4,000 fanegas of wheat were harvested which was among the top seven harvests of that crop.³⁶⁸ As one would suspect the mission specialized in cattle and leather by-products in addition to the growing of

³⁶⁷ Report of this Mission of La Purísima Concepción made today, December 31, 1818, Father Mariano Payeras, SBMA.

³⁶⁸ Estado de las Misiones de la Alta California sacado de los ynformes de las Misiones en fin de Diciembre de 1821, Father José Seán, SBMA.

wheat. In 1820 Purísima gave 500 head of cattle to Mission San Antonio whose herd was less than a half of Purísima's. Mission Purísima kept a running account with Mission Soledad which consisted mainly of leather goods.³⁶⁹ Trade with wealthier missions, such as San Fernando, ran against Purísima, since it had little to offer that San Fernando did not have in larger quantities. However, San Fernando was able to provide Purísima with wine, lemons, oranges and olives. The trade balance favored Purísima in exchanges with poorly endowed missions. Santa Inés received corn, boots and cash. Harnesses were sent north to San Francisco and San Juan Bautista. Wheat was sent as a gift to San Luis Obispo while harnesses were sold to Santa Cruz and San Miguel, a poor mission, was the recipient of leather bags, grain, peas, lima beans, corn and seeds. The mission's charity extended far south to the missions of Lower California. To San Francisco de Borja in 1816, 215 lambs went overland and the following year 350 lambs were sent to San Ygnacio de la Antigua. Six mules were sent to the presidial company at Loreto in 1821 and 200 head of cattle were sent north to the San Francisco presidio. It was natural that the presidios should turn to Purísima to supply leather goods because of her large livestock herds. Orders included leather rainproofs at 5 pesos; saddle pads at 4 pesos, 4 reales; knapsacks at 2 pesos; packsaddles at 12 reales and leather jackets at 21 pesos. Also provided were boots, shoes, harnesses, cinches, sacks, tailpieces, leather straps, buckskins, leather reins, and saddle bags.

Purísima was not unusual. To a greater or lesser extent all of the missions tended to specialize, although always with attention to maintaining self-sufficiency in the production of basic necessities.

The last decade of Spanish California emphasized the cooperation between mission and presidio which had been equally essential in the first decade. Fate, however, reversed the roles of the two institutions by the end of the period. Earlier, mission supplies had been funneled through the military establishment. Additionally, labor and protection provided by the troops were essential for the fledgling missions. But by the decade after 1810, the military was reduced to poverty, dependent upon missions for sustenance. Despite periods and areas of conflict, the essential characteristic of Hispanic California remained cooperation, now out of military necessity and dependence upon the stronger missions.

³⁶⁹ Account Book of Mission Purísima, 1806-1834. Transcribed by Lewis G. Thomas and translated by Elmira Osuna and Lewis G. Thomas, Berkeley, 1938, SBMA. The statistics which follow are on pages 203-209.

Trade with the Outside World



ALTHOUGH THE MISSIONS OF ALTA CALIFORNIA were "outposts of empire" they did not escape the strictures of the prevailing system of Spanish mercantilism. The wealth of Spain, so the theory ran, demanded that her colonies be kept in a state of total dependency. Before 1786 Alta California remained in a perfect state of economic dependency upon New Spain and indirectly upon Spain herself. No trade was allowed with any vessels, Spanish or foreign or by private persons. Only official trade arranged through proper channels with the San Blas supply vessels existed. The effect of such restrictions on the economy of the time was negligible. Missions produced no significant surpluses before that date and hence could not have taken advantage of opportunities for trade.

While California existed in splendid isolation, events were taking place which would begin the integration of California into an international economy. Russian expeditions had long been making private forays into the Aleutian Islands and sea otter in the area were rapidly being depleted. In 1784 a Russian fur trading settlement appeared on Kodiak Island and fifteen years later Sitka was established on mainland Alaska. In 1812 Russian otter hunting had reached the Farallon Islands, close by the Golden Gate. The English commercial approach was spearheaded by three voyages of Captain James Cook, his third voyage being of particular significance. Cook picked up furs from the natives of the Northwest coast, transported and received such good prices for them in China, that the eyes of English merchants were opened to the lucrative trade. With the Declaration of Independence of 1776 by England's Atlantic colonies, the English advance became in part American, although not until 1796 did the first American commercial expedition touch settled portions of Hispanic California.

Spain, meanwhile, under the liberalizing impetus provided by Charles III (1759-1788) began relaxing mercantile restrictions on colonial trade although never during the Spanish period was trade with foreigners legal in California. Down to 1786, California had exported nothing, receiving only vital sustenance from the San Blas lifeline. In 1785-1786 two schemes appeared which allowed export of California products.

The first was a proposal made by Vicente Vasadre y Vega to overcome the insufficient and irregular supply of quicksilver for the silver mines of New Spain by exchanging California sea otter pelts for quicksilver in the Orient. This, the promoter maintained, would head off the advance of the Russians and English and would provide a return cargo for the San Blas supply vessels. The moment for such a project was opportune. The importance of the fur trade had been revealed to Spain by the publication of Cook's voyage of 1778-1779. In January of 1786 the plan received the approval of Viceroy Bernardo de Gálvez and Governor Fages and Father President Lasuén were informed.³⁷⁰ In August 1786, Vasadre himself arrived in California aboard one of the supply ships. As was customary, Vasadre had been granted a monopoly of the entire business along with substantial financial backing. After familiarizing himself with the instructions brought by Vasadre, Governor Fages made the scheme public on August 29th.³⁷¹ These instructions, in effect, made the missionaries Vasadre's agents in California, although he was to be the ultimate recipient of all pelts. Pelts were to be collected by neophyte Indians and the Fathers were given a monopoly on this source. No soldiers could bargain secretly with the neophytes under penalty of confiscation. Informers got one-third the value of any pelts seized as a result of information given. Skins collected by the Fathers were to be handed over to the *Comandante* of the nearest presidio. The set prices ranged from ten pesos for first class skins, which had to be of at least $1\frac{1}{4}$ *varas*, black in color and cured, to two pesos for those of the third class, skins of three-quarters of a *vara*, brown and raw. During his three month stay, Vasadre collected 1060 pelts, some of which came from Lower California.³⁷²

The promise of an expanding fur trade created optimism among Spanish inhabitants of Alta California. In 1786, Governor Fages told the French naturalist explorer, La Perouse, that 50,000 pelts could be collected annually, and added that if the China trade supplied a demand for 30,000 pelts per year, two or three settlements could be established north of San Francisco to procure them.³⁷³ There was reason to be optimistic. The demand for skins, stimulated by Vasadre's project, caused prices to soar from two reales per pelt to a maximum of ten pesos.

In March 1787, however, the Royal *Audiencia* suspended payments to the missions for pelts since it was felt prices agreed upon by Vasadre and Fages were too high. Father Lasuén, in September 1787, made his

³⁷⁰ Bernardo de Gálvez to Lasuén, Mexico, March 1, 1786, SBMA.

³⁷¹ Bancroft, *History of California*, I, 439.

³⁷² Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade*, 16.

³⁷³ Jean F. G. De la Perouse, *A Voyage Round the World Performed in the Years 1785, 1786, 1787 and 1788 by the Boussole and Astrolabe*, 2 vols., New York, 1968, Vol. I, 456-457.

displeasure over this known in a letter to the *Audiencia*.³⁷⁴ Missions continued collecting and exporting pelts, noting size and color for future payments. Foreigners along the coast paid more for the pelts than the price which the *Audiencia* felt was too high. The French and the Filipinos, Lasuén said, paid a considerably higher price for the pelts than the legally fixed one and the French were not likely to make mistakes in business matters.³⁷⁵ Furthermore, the collection of pelts placed a burden upon missions which was entitled to compensation. Support for neophytes assigned to the hunt, in addition to rafts, nets and canoes were all provided by the missions. Lasuén also appealed to the self-interest of the Crown, claiming that a higher price would induce more efficient collection of pelts. The water along the coast was colder than to the south, thus compounding danger for Indians. Also, the pelts along the coast were larger than those specified in the schedule.

The following year, Vasadre collected sixty-four pelts from the missions of Alta California and paid them 411 pesos. Following the usual procedure, the missions were not paid in cash, but Vasadre promised to purchase "articles proper and suitable" for the Indians and to deliver them to the College of San Fernando so they could be forwarded to San Blas and shipped to California. Vasadre's collection had declined notably from the previous year. The ardor of the Fathers was cooled by delayed payments, lowered prices and increased freight charges. By 1788, the supplies due from otter sales of the previous year had not been shipped from New Spain.³⁷⁶

The sea otter trade, welcomed as a unique opportunity, became a source of constant conflict between mission and presidio. The prohibition against soldiers and settlers trading for furs proved to be unenforceable. Military and civilian were guilty of cheating the natives of furs or simply seizing them. They would then bring the furs to the missions, demanding payment and claiming they had hunted them themselves. In such cases the Fathers were obliged to pay seven pesos for pelts which legally already belonged to them. Even when such pelts had been legally hunted, the missions lacked the necessary cash reserves to pay for the pelts. It did not seem reasonable to Lasuén for missions to have to assume risks of accident, losses incurred in transit as well as expenses of storage, packing and crating associated with furs from which missions had little hope of profit.³⁷⁷ A

³⁷⁴ Fermín Francisco de Lasuén to the Royal Audiencia, San Carlos, September 24, 1787, BL. Phs. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, I, 155-158.

³⁷⁵ Lasuén to the Missionaries, San Carlos, September 18, 1787, SBMA.

³⁷⁶ Lasuén to Don Manuel Antonio Flores, San Carlos, July 30, 1788, BL. CC-16. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, I, 177-179.

³⁷⁷ Lasuén, Consideration submitted to Reverend Father Guardian, San Carlos, 1790, AAFH. Trans. in *ibid.*, I, 215.

temporary twist to the scheme in 1787 aggravated Lasuén further. Pelts were to be turned in to the *Habilitados* for better storage and would receive immediate payment. Goods given to Indians in payment were often of poor quality and excessive price and missionaries felt that Indians were being cheated in order to line the purses of the *Habilitados*.³⁷⁸ The price paid for furs was determined in Mexico while payment was made in goods at inflated California prices.

In 1790 the entire project was dropped by royal decree. Vasadre had been blocked in Manila by the self-interest of the Philippine Company which had a monopoly on trade with China. Quicksilver would have to be paid for from other sources, although small quantities of skins continued to be shipped to San Blas for transshipment to the Philippines. There were numerous problems both in California and New Spain hampering the trade from the beginning. Because the natives lacked the requisite skill and the necessary implements, furs were not as numerous as had been expected. The missionaries lost their enthusiasm because they felt the quest for pelts lured neophytes from the missions and that payment was not commensurate with effort and resources expended. The processing of furs after they left California was time consuming, expensive and inefficient. After reaching San Blas pelts went overland to Mexico City to be dressed. Skins then were treated by experts at the capital, placed in pitch-covered boxes to preserve them from moths, and then moved over the mountains to Acapulco to await the Manila Galleon for transportation to the Philippines where Chinese junks completed the last leg of the journey by carrying them to the mainland. The Californians, however, eventually learned the value of pelts and acquired the necessary techniques.

In addition to granting Vasadre's monopoly which was designed to benefit the Crown and not the missions, a liberalization of rules forbidding private trading via the San Blas vessels allowed trade goods to be carried when there was room. The sole restriction forbade the introduction of foreign goods to California. Officers and crew members brought articles on their own accounts for barter with soldiers and missionaries. This concession was renewed in 1794 for a decade. By 1803 it became evident that the original intent of the concession was being subverted. Officers and crews monopolized cargo space on the transports, making private consignments from mission or pueblo impossible. A viceregal decree in April of 1803 prohibited officers and crews from trading or refusing to carry goods consigned by private persons.³⁷⁹ At the same time the decree stipulated that all shipments of private goods, with the exception of official

³⁷⁸ Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade*, 21-22.

³⁷⁹ Viceroy Iturrigaray to Governor of California, Mexico, April 30, 1803. Copy as of June 20, 1803, Loreto, signed by Arrillaga, SBMA.

mission and presidio supplies, were to pay freight. Apparently the Father President apportioned available space among the missions for all exports. Space on the cargo vessels could be traded between missions. Cargo space was allotted according to the number of cattle possessed by the mission and this suggests that tallow and hides were expected to be the primary export.³⁸⁰

This minor concession to the spirit of free enterprise fell far short of the needs of the burgeoning California economy. Missions found it altogether inadequate for the quantities which they had available for export. Further constricting cargo space was official encouragement given to hemp production on royal account. This was to be used primarily for the manufacture of cordage in demand for shipbuilding on the western coast of New Spain. Not until 1793 were official orders for the cultivation of hemp issued, but as early as 1791 experiments had begun. During the summer of 1791, Alejandro Malaspina, an Italian naturalist explorer in the service of Spain, took note of the beginnings of hemp culture. It appeared to the explorer that the experiment would lead to success. The problem was neither the quality of the hemp, which he pronounced excellent, nor the quantity, which appeared abundant. The stumbling block was local technology. No one was familiar with the culture of hemp and the Indians had proved inept. As a consequence, said Malaspina prematurely, such experiments had been stopped. He suggested they grow flax instead of hemp.³⁸¹ Archibald Menzies, naturalist with the Vancouver expedition, substantiated Malaspina's assessment of the hemp crop a year or so later. In November 1792 he noted that at Mission Santa Clara, "they also rear hemp, which flourishes well and is of a good strong quality."³⁸²

In 1793, the Viceroy ordered the Father Guardian of the College of San Fernando, Fray Tomás Pangua, to instruct the California missionaries to begin the culture of hemp. Lasuén remonstrated, claiming that the cultivation of cereals to meet basic needs did not allow time or labor for the cultivation and care of hemp. However, he conceded, since the Viceroy had made the request, it would be complied with.³⁸³ As Malaspina and Menzies testified, small quantities of hemp had been sown before 1795, but not until the spring of that year did the experiment assume large proportions. In that year, enough seed arrived to supply the twelve extant missions. Cultivation at the northern missions was a disappointment. At San Carlos the hemp grew well, but never reached the stage where it could be made into rope.

³⁸⁰ Tapis to the Missionaries, San Carlos, June 30, 1806, SBMA.

³⁸¹ Donald C. Cutter, *Malaspina in California*, San Francisco, 1960, 58.

³⁸² Alice Eastwood, "Menzies California Journal," *CHSQ*, Vol. 2, 1924, 256-340.

³⁸³ Lasuén to Fray Tomás Pangua, San Diego, December 16, 1793, AGN, DHM, ser. I, Vol. I. Trans. in Keanneally, *Writings of Lasuen*, I, 206.

Early shipments of hemp to Mexico encouraged authorities there to promote its cultivation by providing what California lacked; skill and technology. Accordingly, in 1802, Joaquín Sánchez, marine sergeant and expert in the cultivation of hemp and flax, arrived in California. As an added inducement, California hemp would be valued at 3 pesos, 4 reales per arroba even though all agreed its actual value was 2 pesos. Sánchez distributed eleven fanegas of seed to San Luis Obispo, Purísima, Santa Inés and mission San José.³⁸⁴ The industry under proper direction flourished and by 1810 production had outstripped the capacity of the supply vessels. In that year San Gabriel shipped 15,582 pounds; San Fernando, 7,600 pounds; San Luis, 2,044 pounds; San Diego, 44,781 pounds and Mission Santa Barbara shipped 4,583 pounds. The year 1810 was the last in which hemp was shipped on royal account because after that year there was neither money with which to pay for it, nor ships with which to transport it.³⁸⁵

The decade from 1795 to 1805 was crucial in the development of Hispanic California. The fertility of soil and climate was becoming evident and products of value for export were discovered including sea otter, tallow, hides, hemp, and grains. Although California remained in the background while Spain was concerned with more imminent problems, there were those who saw its economic potential. In the early 1790's a Spanish naturalist, José Longinos Martínez visited Alta California and determined that:

All the Spanish crops that have been tried have yielded in the greatest abundance. One of the crops which would promote commerce in that country is flax and hemp. With this, and with tallow, flour and furs, the Spaniards would make a beginning; other activities would be promoted; people would come, mines would be worked, and the nations that frequent those coasts for the single purpose of getting furs (not having our numbers) would be astonished.³⁸⁶

The resources of California were in Martínez's view being wasted. In the Northwest, seal skins had to be paid for with effects costing six to eight pesos, while in New California they did not exceed two pesos, and even at that price, he continued, there was no one to purchase them. He had seen great lots of them spoil for want of purchasers and because of this, few were interested in hunting.

The royal engineer, Miguel Costansó, corroborated Longinos Martínez in 1794.³⁸⁷ He enumerated the items which California had for

³⁸⁴ Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 179.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 180 fn.

³⁸⁶ Lesley Byrd Simpson, trans., *California in 1792; the Expedition of José Longinos Martínez*. San Marino, California, 1938, 33.

³⁸⁷ Informe de Don Miguel Costansó al Virrey Marqués de Branciforte, Sobre El Proyecto de Fortificar los Presidios de la Nueva California, Mexico, October 17, 1794, BNM. Ms. 19, 266. Transcribed in José Porrua Turanzas, ed. *Noticias y Documentos Acerca de la Californias, 1765-1795*. Madrid, 1959, 223-244.

export adding a variety of fishes, dried meat and various grains. Free trade was badly needed and was essential, otherwise the area might be abandoned since the inhabitants would have no way in which to feed themselves. The obstruction, he correctly determined, came from the merchants of Cadiz who feared competition would injure their monopoly. The Crown was spending money needlessly on supply ships and losing revenue from imposts which could have derived from private commerce. In a concise argument, he pressed for liberalization of trade.

All considered, it would be of major importance to promote shipping on the coasts of Sonora, Nueva Galicia and the Californias and generally on all the coasts of the South Sea, embraced in the extension of this viceroyalty; encouraging their inhabitants in the construction of small ships conceding exemption from duties to them and free commerce among them, considering that all have a mutual need, that all are brothers and vassals of the same sovereign and that navigation and commerce ought to be the poles about which revolve the population and prosperity of the entire colony. It is sad to consider that in the whole length of the Pacific Coast of North America the King does not have a single vassal who is owner or proprietor of a sloop, schooner or other vessel. . . .³⁸⁸

As late as 1814, naval lieutenant Don Francisco de Paula Tamariz argued that San Blas ought to be completely given up and Californians ought to be encouraged to build ships and engage in commerce. The prosperity of any establishment depended on significant maritime commerce which California lacked because of exorbitant costs and poor quality of shipments.³⁸⁹

The missions continued to utilize the restricted space aboard the supply vessels for exports of pelts, hemp, tallow, foodstuffs and hides and received shipments of the usual goods in return. Because of expanding production and trade, men such as José de la Guerra y Noriega began to handle financial affairs of the missions.³⁹⁰ As Friar's Syndic he became their intermediary with Mexico and shipments from the College of San Fernando were consigned to him if they were not a part of the annual *memoria* paid for with stipends and drafts on presidios. These shipments were paid for with profits earned on exports. Perhaps some of the monies used as payment were derived from illegal sales of foreign ships. Most of the items remitted to De la Guerra fell in the category of luxury goods: blue cloth, silk, fancy buttons, and fully equipped side saddles.³⁹¹

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁹ Memoria que presenta al Rey N.S. el teniente de navio D. Francisco de Paula Tamariz, sobre mejorar el sistema de gobierno de la Alta California, San Fernando, May 20, 1814. Archivo y Biblioteca de la Secretaria de Hacienda Colección de Documentos Historicos, Toma II. Transcribed in *Las Misiones de la Alta California*, Mexico D.F. 1914, 89-111.

³⁹⁰ For a biography of José de la Guerra, one of the foremost Californians of his time, see Joseph A. Thompson, *El Gran Capitan; José De la Guerra*, Los Angeles, 1961.

³⁹¹ El Señor Don José de la Guerra y Noriega por la siguiente que lo tengo remitido por encarga y conducto del R.P. Fr. José Viñals por Don Esteban Velez de Escalante, Mexico, January 17, 1809, DGC. Accounts and Business Papers, SBMA. Escalante was the syndic for the College of San Fernando in Mexico.

Tamariz, in his memorial, also discussed problems affecting the export of mission products. Quantities of foodstuffs were going to waste for lack of a legal outlet. He noted that weekly the missions butchered, for the maintenance of the neophytes, 350 to 400 cows and in only one year the missions slaughtered close to 19,000 head of cattle. An equal number of hides were available for export, in addition to twenty-six or thirty thousand arrobas of tallow and fat. The hides were discarded since they lacked a market and the tallow and fat sold for only four to six reales per arroba. He estimated that annually 2,500 to 3,000 furs came into the hands of the missionaries, but few of them were remitted to San Blas because China bound "Boston Men" appeared each year and paid better prices with no delay.³⁹²

The problem of a limited market was a recurrent theme. The tribulations of Father Señán at Mission San Buenaventura illustrate the problem dramatically. Delays in payment for goods remitted was a constant thorn. In 1806 Father Señán complained that during the year, 132 skins of tallow weighing 741 arrobas, 200 dressed cowhides and 64 sheepskins had been shipped to Mexico but the mission account with the agent had not been settled in two years.³⁹³ In 1808 he claimed mission production had been so great that it was impossible to ship at a profit. San Buenaventura had, in the year, produced 200 skins of tallow weighing 1,428 arrobas which were sold to an un-named purchaser in Mexico who was to pay the syndic at Tepic. The same purchaser had also contracted for fifty skins of lard weighing 321 arrobas. The lard and tallow had earned the mission 1,956 pesos, 4 reales.³⁹⁴ Even hemp, which was produced by order of the King to provide cordage for ships, ran into the problem of inadequate transportation. In 1810 Señán complained that 450 animal skins remained unsold and they should have brought the mission 3,000-4,000 pesos.³⁹⁵

The missionaries continued to ship furs to San Blas, although reluctantly, since risks incumbent upon shipping and storage were borne entirely by the missionaries. Fray Martín Landaeta, at Mission San Francisco, complained that a shipment of furs remained in the hands of the commissary because they had not been registered. What doubly disturbed

³⁹² Memoria que presenta el Rey N.S. el teniente de navío D. Francisco Tamariz, 100. Some of what Tamariz says is suspect since he made but one short voyage to California and much of his evidence is not first hand.

³⁹³ Señán to Father José Viñals, San Buenaventura, November 5, 1806, DML. Trans. in Nathan and Simpson, *Letters of Señán*, Berkeley, 1961, 23-25.

³⁹⁴ Señán to Father José Viñals, San Buenaventura, November 3, 1808, DML. Trans. in *ibid.*, 35.

³⁹⁵ Señán to Fray José Guilez, San Buenaventura, November 6, 1810, DML. Trans. in *ibid.*, 49.

him was the possibility that they would be treated poorly while in storage.³⁹⁶ Sea otter pelts were often pilfered before they reached their destination. After the expiration of Vasadre's contract, Lasuén informed the missionaries that they should continue to collect furs since there was no lack of private persons to purchase them. Furs should be sent to the syndic,

... but arranged in such a way that he alone may know what is being sent him. For this purpose, something else might be mixed up with them so that the official on board to whose kindness they are entrusted, and all others, may think they are something else, something that has little or no attraction for them, such as burial shrouds.³⁹⁷

The attractiveness of smuggling in such a situation could not have remained hidden long from the discerning eyes of the Fathers. In 1803 Fray Landaeta warned his superior of the attractiveness of trade with the Americans. He explained that he was remitting four sea otter pelts, but that three American ships had cast anchor during the summer and they were willing to pay eight to ten pesos per pelt. Discreetly he added, "even if they had paid much more, I would not have engaged in smuggling."³⁹⁸

The missionaries would have been perfectly willing to keep to the legitimate channels of trade if it had been expanded to suit their needs. Many Fathers made good faith attempts to find sales for their surpluses in Mexico and were largely unsuccessful because of lack of transportation and high costs when it was available. Cost of transport was particularly onerous overland from San Blas to Mexico City. In 1810 Father Mariano Payeras, at Mission Purísima, suggested to the College that he be permitted to send consignments of goods to them for sale in Mexico City. His mission, he reported, had chamois of smooth deerskin, otter pelts, well turned clay items and other goods which could not be sold in California and were worth little in San Blas. He was making this proposal because one of the Fathers at the College had written him that white chamois was valued there at five pesos, which would provide a substantial profit. Such a scheme would go far toward covering the cost of the annual supplies.³⁹⁹ Trade via the supply service emanating from San Blas never met the expanded needs and completely ceased after 1810.

1810 did not mark the end of legitimate trade in California as has sometimes been supposed. Spanish vessels continued to move goods between ports both in New Spain and Peru. That year marked the end of

³⁹⁶ Fray Martín Landaeta to Fray Tomás de la Peña, Mission San Francisco, July 20, 1805. *Biblioteca Mexicana de Obras Inéditas*, Vol. 22 *Noticias Acerca del Puerto de San Francisco*, Mexico, 1949, 53-54.

³⁹⁷ Lasuén to the Missionaries, San Carlos, July 22, 1791, SBMA.

³⁹⁸ Fray Martín Landaeta to Fray Tomás de la Peña, Mission San Francisco, August 30, 1803. *Noticias Acerca del Puerto de San Francisco*, 49.

³⁹⁹ Payeras to Fray Josef Guilez, Purísima, November 5, 1810, AGN. *Historia de Mexico*, Primera serie, tomo 2. Transcript in SBMA.

government subsidies for the missions and the end of support for both the supply service and the military. The Hidalgo Revolt of 1810 marked the end of regular government support of the California enterprise, but it did not mean the isolation of California, rather it gave added impetus to the internationalization of the province. Smuggling became a necessity rather than simply a way of supplementing income.

Opportunities for legitimate trade after 1810 were more numerous than before. At least twenty Spanish vessels made port in California between 1810 and 1821.⁴⁰⁰ Since these ships carried no government provided supplies, their purpose was to trade entire cargos for products provided primarily by the missions. California was not injured by the disappearance of trade on the San Blas transports nor was mission revenue wiped out by the lack of stipends. Economic hardships derived only from the lack of military salaries and the replacement of those by the missions never worked undue hardship.

Legal foreign trade consisted mainly of tallow and involved substantial trust by the missionaries of the men with whom they were dealing. Captain José Arce, of the brigantine "El Mexicano" was the first private trader to arrive in California after 1810. His ship evidently carried little in the way of trade goods. The missionaries, eager to make a sale, were willing to trust him to make port at Acapulco and deposit cash to cover his cargo of tallow. Father José Viader of Santa Clara entrusted a load of tallow to Arce at eleven reales per arroba with no second thoughts, but Father Durán at San José was skeptical, although he sold Arce 1489 pesos worth of tallow.⁴⁰¹ He informed the Procurator at the College of San Fernando to be on the lookout for Arce since according to his contract he was supposed to make payment at Acapulco. However, he said, Arce had a poor reputation and might have sailed directly for his home port of Guayaquil. In October of 1811, "El Mexicano" was off Santa Barbara where Arce offered only eight reales per arroba of tallow. No deal was completed since the Fathers insisted the ship take all their fats, both tallow and lard.⁴⁰²

High prices for items of foreign origin and the willingness of foreign traders to offer only low prices characterized trade of this period, partic-

⁴⁰⁰ For an incomplete list of ships visiting California during this period, see William Heath Davis, *Seventy-Five Years in California*, San Francisco, 1929.

⁴⁰¹ Father Viader to Procurator, Santa Clara, September 29, 1811, HL. Stearns-Gaffey, McPherson, Monterey, Vallejo and California Collection. Photostat SBMA. Narciso Durán to Procurator, San José, September 30, 1811. Collection of California Historical Society and Durán to Procurator, San José, June 27, 1812. Collection of California Historical Society. Trans. in Francis Price, "Letters of Narciso Durán." *CHSQ*, Vol. 27, 1958, 98-128.

⁴⁰² Señán to Fray José Guilez, San Buenaventura, November 3, 1811, DML. Trans. in Nathan and Simpson, *Letters of Señán*, 57-59.

ularly the Lima trade which began with the arrival of the "Flora" and "Tagle" in 1813. The supercargo of the "Tagle" circulated a letter to the missionaries of which Father Señán complained:

Her supercargo has circulated to the several missions a very long letter full of honeyed words and flattery. At last he came to the point, offering to buy our tallow at 8 reales the arroba and listing the goods he wanted to sell us at exorbitant prices. We hear he later changed his tune somewhat, raising to 12 reales his bid for tallow. He wants 50 pesos the hundredweight for his iron, 14 pesos for vermicelli, etc., etc.⁴⁰³

Despite Señán's resentment of prices, he was thankful for any opportunity to trade. Later he expressed his feeling to the Procurator. The Limeños had promised to return with badly needed articles from Lima, "and thanks be to Divine Providence for bringing us these Peruvian ships," Señán wrote, "which we have never before seen on these shores. "God," he said, "must have arisen in this Province."⁴⁰⁴ Despite complaints about prices, the Lima traders were willing to extend credit to the missions. Captain Nicolas Noé of the "Flora" had given goods to Mission San Gabriel with the agreement that on a subsequent trip he would be paid in tallow and cash.⁴⁰⁵

The Lima ships adequately took over the functions of the San Blas service. They not only functioned as traders, but also conveyed goods to Mexico for a freight fee which was approximately six reales per arroba, although it varied according to what missionaries were willing to pay. Fees were paid by the syndic when the cargo, the bulk of which was usually lard, hides and tallow, was deposited at Acapulco. On return voyages to California the traders transported items purchased by the College for the missions for a freight fee, although as special favors for missionaries, small items were often delivered gratis. In the absence of supply ships, the mail service was handled by private vessels and included warrants, official and personal correspondence. Official mail service continued to be provided, but it took a slow and laborious route down the peninsula to Loreto to await passage across the Gulf of California for which reason the Fathers preferred to communicate by sea.

1815 and 1816 were hard years. The missions were unable to sell surpluses since no trading ships arrived. Buenos Aires' insurgents had blockaded Callao and Guayaquil, thereby interdicting trade to the north. The only ship to arrive in 1815 was the "Paz y Religión", a private trader

⁴⁰³ Señán to Fray José Guilez, San Buenaventura, April 18, 1812, DML. Trans in *ibid.*, 66-68. Fifty pesos per hundredweight was at least double the usual price.

⁴⁰⁴ Señán to Father Juan Norberto de Santiago, San Buenaventura, December 7, 1813, DML. Trans. in *ibid.*, 75.

⁴⁰⁵ Fathers Zalvidea and Nuez to Señán, San Gabriel, September 24, 1814, AASF. Photostat in SBMA.

which transported the new Governor, Pablo Vicente de Solá. According to Father José Viader at Mission Santa Clara, the ship wished to sell dearly and to trade for tallow. He was aghast at the forty pesos demanded for a pair of wool cards.⁴⁰⁶ In 1816 arrived the only ship of the decade to carry official supplies. The shipment aboard the "San Carlos" was prompted by fear of insurgent attack and contained mainly war stores and little for the missions.⁴⁰⁷

In 1817 three foreign trading ships, the "San Antonio", "Hermosa Mexicana" from Lima and the "Cazadora" from Panama were off the California coast. Father Narciso Durán exclaimed from Mission San José that, "they fleece us by high prices." In a reference to smuggling he commented, "the foreigners are always cheaper but they will receive only sea otter pelts or money. . . ."⁴⁰⁸ The trade in this year was of large proportions. Mission Purísima supplied 2573 arrobas of tallow, delivering some of it at *Refugio* and the remainder at Santa Barbara. The price varied from 12 reales to 2 pesos per arroba and the mission derived a total revenue of 4492 pesos, 6 reales including 150 pesos worth of provisions sold to the ships.⁴⁰⁹ The revenue was totally expended on goods and for satisfaction of debts. Governor Solá, desperate for supplies, requisitioned 16,000 arrobas of tallow, 4,000 arrobas to be collected from missions in each of the four presidio districts. This he traded with the "Hermosa Mexicana" for provisions.⁴¹⁰ Solá later informed José De la Guerra that he had purchased a number of items from the "San Antonio", some for his own use and the others for the presidios of San Diego and Santa Barbara. The total purchase amounted to 1,280 pesos which was 40 percent over cost of the goods in Lima.⁴¹¹ It was also common during this period for trading vessels to conduct some coastal traffic in California. In 1818 Mission Santa Cruz had cut a number of beams for Santa Barbara which were deposited at the *embarcadero* in Monterey. It was expected that "La Mexicana" would move the beams south.⁴¹²

The Californias, having learned their lesson, soon discovered how to

⁴⁰⁶ Father Viader to Father Norberto de Santiago, Santa Clara, September 20, 1815, HL. Stearns-Gaffey, McPherson, Monterey, Vallejo and California File Collection. Photostat SBMA.

⁴⁰⁷ Father Gerónimo Boscana to Governor Solá, San Juan Capistrano, February 21, 1817, AASF. Photostat SBMA. And Father Durán to Procurator, San José, October 28, 1816. Collections of the California Historical Society. Trans. in Price, "Letters of Duran," 121.

⁴⁰⁸ Durán to Procurator, San José, October 15, 1817. Collections of the California Historical Society. Trans. in *ibid.*, 247.

⁴⁰⁹ List of debts of Mission Purísima, Santa Barbara, November 17, 1817, SBMA. *Refugio* was located west of Santa Barbara and was the site of the Ortega Rancho. It was a center of contraband activity throughout the period.

⁴¹⁰ Solá to De la Guerra, Monterey, August 23, 1817, DGC, SBMA.

⁴¹¹ Solá to De La Guerra, San Luis Obispo, October 29, 1817, DGC, SBMA.

⁴¹² Father Ramón Olbés to De la Guerra, Santa Cruz, July 27, 1818 and Olbés to De la Guerra, Santa Cruz, October 5, 1818, DGC, SBMA.

fleece the foreigner. The Christian conscience of Fray Juan Amoros was wounded by these unbecoming acts. He wrote to José De la Guerra that it did not surprise him when strangers charged high prices for their goods, but he was amazed that Californians would exact a high price for items which were abundant. He insisted to Governor Solá:

Cattle are not 16, 12 nor 8 pesos and this doesn't seem to me to be just in this land because they are naturally abundant. Not many days ago I gave an Indian a calf for a pouch of tobacco. We know that the regular price of cattle is 4 pesos and the highest price should not be more than 6 pesos. Now as far as grain is concerned the price should be the same for the foreigner and at least not over 2 reales more.⁴¹³

Several inventories of goods received and ordered by Mission San Gabriel provide insight into the character of the trade and current prices. The inventory of goods remitted from Lima to California for Mission San Gabriel in 1817 amounted to 2,902 pesos, 2 reales and were to be delivered by the brigantine "San Antonio."⁴¹⁴ The cargo was delivered to José De la Guerra as intermediary and he was to deliver the shipment to the mission. The missionaries were conceded the right to refuse any part of the cargo which was not to their satisfaction, in which case the unwanted items were to be returned to De la Guerra. He was empowered by the supercargo of the ship to sell such items for the highest obtainable price in silver. If the goods could not be sold for cash he was further authorized to trade them for tallow valued at twelve pesos per arroba.

The goods remitted were of a very different character from those of early years. Outside of a few items not produced in California no foodstuffs were included. Two categories, metal and medicines, made up most of the cargo. Copper dishes sold for two pesos each, hoes at twenty reales, nails from four to six reales per pound, iron wire at eight reales per pound and brass wire for two pesos per pound. The invoice contained a wide variety of medicines including cream of tartar, various tinctures, crystals, unguents and balms. Balm for venereal disease and the pain killer laudanum, which included opium, were sent. Lancets, pots, bottles and scalpels completed hospital supplies. The mission received wool cards at 3½ pesos per pair and a variety of cloth items. Foodstuffs included *panocha* at forty cakes per peso, sugar at eighteen reales per arroba and chocolate at nineteen reales per arroba.⁴¹⁵

De la Guerra delivered the shipment to the *majordomo* of San Gabriel in December and Claudio López signed the receipt for the

⁴¹³ Father Juan Amoros to De la Guerra, San Carlos, April 25, 1817, DGC, SBMA.

⁴¹⁴ Factura del Costo y Gastos de los efectos que remito en el Bergantino San Antonio a los Padres de la Misión de San Gabriel en la Alta California, Santa Barbara, November 13, 1817, signed by Juan José Mayo, DGC, SBMA.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

mission.⁴¹⁶ The total had increased to 3,542 pesos, 6 reales. De la Guerra had added some books, barrels and rhubarb desired by the missionaries, but the bulk of the additional charge was 522 pesos, 2 reales which apparently was surcharged by De la Guerra for handling the transaction. This was not the import duty since that is listed separately. At least a portion of the cargo had been given to San Gabriel on credit and partial payment was made the following April in cash.⁴¹⁷

Cargoes transported to California were either to fill previous orders or for sale upon arrival. Goods not sold were never returned, but were left in the custody of a trusted agent for future sale when the market was not satiated. Don José Cavenecia who resided in Peru and owned the "San Antonio", often had his supercargos, Juan José Mayo, consign goods to José De la Guerra at Santa Barbara. Such was the case in the items added to the order of Mission San Gabriel described above. After the "San Antonio" had departed the Fathers decided to purchase those items which had been consigned to De la Guerra.⁴¹⁸

José De la Guerra also kept a running account with his cousin, Nicolás de Noriega in Mexico City. Nicolás essentially served as José's purchasing agent in Mexico City remitting to California goods which had been special ordered or for which José anticipated a prospective market. Many of the goods handled in this fashion were purchased by the missions because of their sound credit. Trading with soldiers was risky business since they paid in drafts on the *Habilitado General*, but sales to the missions were safe investments. They were often able to pay in cash derived from smuggling operations and if not they paid in drafts on the College of San Fernando or in kind including lard, tallow, hides or foodstuffs for De la Guerra's use.⁴¹⁹ Goods being remitted to California on De la Guerra's account were consigned to a private vessel for shipment. Such a contract was made in January of 1821 with Don Juan Malarín of the brigantine "El Señoriano" which arrived in California early in the spring. The shipment included hardware, dry goods, *panocha*, brandy and iron which was always badly in need.⁴²⁰ In addition to filling special orders, the trade with Lima and

⁴¹⁶ Factura de los Efectos que el que subscribe a entregado para cuenta de la Mision de San Gabriel y por aviso de sus Padres Ministros al Mayordomo de la Misma Claudio Lopez, con la Marca y numeros del Margen, Santa Barbara, December 9, 1817, signed by José De la Guerra and Claudio López, DGC, SBMA.

⁴¹⁷ Fray Pascual Nuez to Solá, San Gabriel, April 25, 1818, AASF. Photostat SBMA.

⁴¹⁸ Existentes que quedan en poder del Señor Don José De la Guerra y Noriega por su Venta y por cuenta de Don José Cavenecia, signed by Juan José Mayo, Santa Barbara, November 13, 1817, DGC, SBMA.

⁴¹⁹ Cuenta Corriente con mi Primo Don José Antonio de la Guerra y Noriega Teniente del Presidio de Santa Barbara en las Californias, y es como sigue. Signed by Nicolás de Noriega, Mexico, April 8, 1818, DGC, SBMA.

⁴²⁰ Factura de los efectos que con la Marca y Numero del margen embarcamos en el Bergantino Señoriano con destino a la Alta California a la consignación de Don Juan Malarín. Signed by Josef Medina, Tepic, January 27, 1821, DGC, SBMA.

Mexico provided an outlet for mission surpluses and consequent revenue. A stock of goods was available throughout most of the year from which missions and individuals could fill needs.

1818 and 1819 were poor years for trade. Gaspar Illas of the frigate "Hermosa Mexicana" explained the problem to José De la Guerra. Trading from Peru was fraught with peril because of revolutionary corsairs. Although he made a trip he was not able to obtain everything ordered and prices were extremely high.⁴²¹ In a second letter Illas explained that the Limeños were becoming difficult to trade with since they wanted to be paid only in Peruvian or Mexican silver and would not accept the various provincial coins in circulation because of their doubtful value.⁴²² 1820 and 1821 more than made up for the dearth of shipments in the previous two years since in those years at least ten legitimate trading vessels made port in California selling and trading goods for credit, cash and tallow.⁴²³

The trade goods brought from Peru and Mexico were gathered and carefully calculated to meet the needs most acutely felt by the missions, but those needs in themselves generally suggest that the pinch of straitened circumstances rested only lightly upon the missions in contrast to the genuine hardship felt by the troops. Father José Viader informed the Procurator in 1812 that the needs most acutely felt at Mission San José were for wax, wine for mass, clothing, chocolate, Spanish brandy, cream of tartar and other medicines. In 1817, Father Señán submitted a list of articles to the College which he wanted if there was any way to send them. Foodstuffs included *panocha*, rice, sugar, chocolate, vermicelli and a large assortment of spices. He also needed a variety of medicines and a long list of religious items. Because of a dislike for the rough cloth produced at the mission, habits, cowls and tunics from Mexico were a necessity as was snuff. Amounts of specialized cloth were requested as was a quantity of hardware and implements.⁴²⁴ The only item frequently in shortage not requested by Señán was iron. The trade goods supplied by private shippers did meet shortages claimed by the missionaries and secondly, the desires of the missionaries were not for items basic to survival.

After 1810 free trade with other Spanish nationals was the rule. This continued with no restriction or encumbrance until Governor Solá imposed an import and export tax in the summer of 1817. This he considered essential since it was the only source of provincial revenue other than

⁴²¹ Gaspar Illas to José De la Guerra, Monterey, September 3, 1818, DGC, SBMA.

⁴²² Gaspar Illas to José De la Guerra, San Gabriel, November 20, 1818, DGC, SBMA.

⁴²³ Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 292-440.

⁴²⁴ Señán to Father Juan Norberto de Santiago, San Buenaventura, November 6, 1816, DML. List of Supplies for 1817 by Señán, San Buenaventura, November 6, 1816, DML. Trans. in Nathan and Simpson, *Letters of Señán*, 93-95.

cash and goods requisitioned from the missions. The only items exempted were those for direct use of the missionaries or for the church. In August of 1817 he ordered that imports pay the same rates as they had paid at ports of exportation as shown on manifests. This was supplemented by a decree sometime in September in which exports were to pay a 12 percent ad volorem tax.⁴²⁵ Solá communicated his plans to De la Guerra in September saying that soap was to pay three reales per arroba in proportion to that which was paid on tallow. All other exported items were to pay a duty which would be stipulated in a forthcoming tariff regulation. "If tallow," he said, "which is valued at 12 reales per arroba pays duty of 1½ reales, everything else will pay in proportion."⁴²⁶ In other words, it was 12 percent of accepted value. According to Bancroft, duties were reduced in 1820 to 6.25 percent on imports and increased to 12.5 percent on exported tallow.⁴²⁷ Although there were exceptions, duties were not paid in California, but a draft signed by the shipper was sent to the *Habilitado General* at Guadalajara.⁴²⁸ Although the shipper was theoretically liable to pay both import and export duties, the import duties at least were passed on to the ultimate purchaser of the cargo. In 1817, for example, an import duty of 127 pesos on a cargo valued at 2,902 pesos, 2 reales was passed on to Mission San Gabriel.⁴²⁹ In 1821 the Fathers attempted to claim exemption from duties and Solá recognized their protest by allowing them to pay a lump sum supposed to exceed the duties which would be refunded if authorities in Mexico decided the missionaries' claims were valid.⁴³⁰ The imposition of customs duties encouraged the missionaries to engage in smuggling even with vessels engaged in legitimate trade. In January of 1821 Governor Solá found it necessary to warn De la Guerra that he had been informed that the missionaries had been buying goods exempt from duties claiming they were for their own use and then using them for speculation. Further, they were shipping merchandise labeled as gifts which in reality was for sale.⁴³¹

The Nootka Sound Convention of 1794 internationalized the Northwest, but it established, in international law, the exclusive right of Spain to the coast of California occupied by Spain. Clearly any foreign vessel hunting otter or attempting to trade was in violation of the agreement.

⁴²⁵ Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 419.

⁴²⁶ Solá to De la Guerra, Santa Barbara, September 29, 1817, DGC, SBMA.

⁴²⁷ Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 419.

⁴²⁸ Solá to De la Guerra, Soledad, March 5, 1818, DGC, SBMA.

⁴²⁹ Factura de los efectos que el que subscribe a entregado por cuenta de la Mision de San Gabriel y por aviso de sus Padres Ministros al Mayordomo de la Misma Claudio López, con la Marca y Numeros del Margen, signed by Claudio López and José De la Guerra, Santa Barbara, December 9, 1817, DGC, SBMA.

⁴³⁰ Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 438.

⁴³¹ Solá to De la Guerra, Monterey, January 16, 1821, DGC, SBMA.

Yankee or "Boston Men", in the spurt of economic development after independence were never willing to submit to restrictions placed upon them by others. Their confidence plus the elimination of competitors from the Pacific due to the Napoleonic wars in Europe created a vacuum along the Pacific Coast of America into which bold Yankee traders willingly surged. California's first taste of a "Boston Man" was unsavory. In October of 1796 Captain Ebenezer Dorr of the Boston ship "Otter" put into Monterey harbor. After explaining that he was taking 1,000 skins collected on the Northwest Coast to China and had run out of provisions, he was royally feted and his ship provisioned on orders of Governor Borica. After having been thus introduced to Spanish hospitality, Captain Dorr unceremoniously abandoned ten unwanted men and one woman at gunpoint and weighed anchor.⁴³² In 1799 a second ship, the "Eliza" under Captain James Rowan put into Monterey hoping to exchange its cargo for pelts. Governor Arrillaga suspected Rowan's intentions, allowed him to purchase supplies and sent him on his way.⁴³³ International law and Spanish law required that vessels be provisioned, but Arrillaga would not allow opportunities for hunting or illegal trade. It was customary for American ships to put in at several ports on their way down the California coast and to attempt contraband activity while protesting they were simply seeking to replenish stores of provisions.

Despite Father Landaeta's insistence that no matter how much Americans were willing to pay he would not sell them pelts, William Shaler, a true Connecticut Yankee, found them willing accessories in smuggling. From 1803 to 1805 he was a frequent, although clandestine, visitor to the missions.⁴³⁴ In his journal of 1804 he gave welcome advice to all who would follow:

For several years American trading ships have frequented this coast in search of furs and they have left annually in the country about \$25,000 in specie and merchandise. The missionaries are the principle monopolizers of the fur trade. Anyone acquainted with the coast can easily obtain abundant provisions.⁴³⁵

Shaler was able to find provisions for his ship, the "Lelia Byrd" and dispose of the remainder of his cargo with remarkable ease. By the time he finished canvassing the missions, some twenty or at least one-half of the pious padres were in his debt. Of these, only four had honored their notes,

⁴³² Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade*, 32-33.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴³⁴ Fray Martin Landaeta to Fray Tomás de la Peña, San Francisco, August 30, 1803, *Noticias Acerca del Puerto de San Francisco*, 49.

⁴³⁵ William Shaler, *Journal of a Voyage Between China and the Northwest Coast of America Made in 1804 by William Shaler*, Claremont, California, 1935, 59. On Shaler see Roy F. Nichol's, *Advance Agents of American Destiny*, Philadelphia, 1956.

proving to be no more prompt in bill paying than the Spanish government which they later vociferously criticized.

The influx of foreigners along the coast of California before 1803 aroused officials to suspect that a plea for provisions was merely a ruse for contraband trade. Requests to refrain from smuggling were not new. As early as 1794 Governor Borica had elicited promises from a number of the missionaries not to engage in clandestine trade. In November and December of that year came promises from several missions, including San Luis Obispo, San Buenaventura and San Juan Capistrano.⁴³⁶ In March of 1804 it was decided to put an end to clandestine commerce by refusing entrance to foreign ships in California ports. A royal order was issued on March 19 and was forwarded to presidial commanders and missionaries. Raymundo Carrillo at Santa Barbara acknowledged receipt of the order. He replied to Arrillaga:

I have in my hands the royal order of last March 19 which your Excellency copied and to which I will give the desired compliance in all cases which occur so as not to give entrance to any foreign ship in order to avoid clandestine commerce.⁴³⁷

The effect of the new attitude was to drive contraband activity further underground and to cause hardships for Yankee traders who now found it difficult to trade for skins. The "Hazard" and James Rowan were along the coast again in 1804 but found all ports closed. All supplies, even water, were refused. William Shaler was along the coast in May and claimed he "got abundant supplies of provisions and began trade with the missionaries and inhabitants for furs."⁴³⁸ He did not attempt a legal entrance into any Spanish port. Shaler was back again in 1805 with apparent success. Attempts at barter for skins, which was risky with only limited success, was abandoned in favor of the 50/50 agreement made by Joseph O'Cain with the Russian, Alexander Baronov, in 1803.

The agreement with the Russians did not put an end to attempts at contraband trade with the missionaries, Indians and Hispanic residents of California. The "Mercury" commanded by William Heath Davis, engaged in an extensive smuggling operation along the coast of both Upper and Lower California in 1806-1807. The account book of this voyage

⁴³⁶ Fray Gregorio Fernández and Fray Miguel Giribet to Governor Borica, San Luis Obispo, November 27, 1794, AASF. Photostat SBMA. Fray Francisco Dumetz and Fray Vicente de Santa María to Borica, San Buenaventura, November 29, 1794, AASF. Photostat in SBMA. Fray Vicente Fuster to Borica, San Juan Capistrano, December 3, 1794, AASF. Photostat SBMA.

⁴³⁷ Raymundo Carrillo to Governor Arrillaga, Santa Barbara, May 4, 1804, AASF. Photostat SBMA.

⁴³⁸ Shaler, *Journal of a Voyage*, 143. For further discussion of this period, see John Polich, "Intrusions on Spain's Pacific Coast 1786-1810." Unpublished dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1968.

TABLE 13
GOODS GIVEN BY THE "MERCURY" IN EXCHANGE
FOR OTTER SKINS

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|
| Penknife..... | \$.75 | Files (dozen)..... | \$ 1.50 |
| Knife..... | .25 | Blue Cloth (yard)..... | 2.50 |
| Powder (pound)..... | 1.00 | Spermaceti Candles (doz.)..... | 6.00 |
| Plates (doz.)..... | 4.00 | Drawing Knives (½ doz.)..... | 5.25 |
| Tumblers (doz.)..... | 2.50 | Hammer..... | .50 |
| Gun Hammer..... | .50 | Frying Pan..... | 1.00 |
| Corkscrew..... | .50 | Chafing Dish..... | 4.00 |
| Powder Flask..... | .50 | Case of Rum..... | 11.00 |
| Horn Flask..... | 2.50 | Tobacco (pound)..... | .37 |
| Cotton Hose..... | 1.50 | Razors (doz.)..... | 4.50 |
| Pitcher..... | .75 | Umbrella..... | 5.00 |
| Mugs..... | .50 | Auger..... | .58 |
| Large Dish..... | 1.00 | Silk Thread (pound)..... | 8.00 |
| Razor..... | 1.00 | Red Baize (yard)..... | .50 |
| Steel Chisels (doz.)..... | 5.00 | Silk Hose (pair)..... | 2.50 |
| Hatchet..... | 1.00 | Button..... | .25 |
| Cooper's Adze..... | 1.00 | Handsaws (doz.)..... | 20.00 |

There were many other specialized items, but all fell within the categories of those listed above. Hardware items were by far the largest category, followed by imported cloth and kitchen utensils.

provides concrete evidence of the willingness of the missionaries to trade, of otters supplied and items purchased by the missions.⁴³⁹

In return for goods, the "Mercury" was given primarily otter pelts collected by the missions for such purposes. The prices paid for skins by the Yankees underwent extreme variation from as low as one peso to a high of ten pesos, depending on the size, quality and condition of the pelt. Small amounts of provisions were sold by missionaries to traders, sometimes at inflated prices. These included bullocks at 5 and 7½ pesos; sheep at 2½ pesos; tobacco at 4 reales per pound; corn at 3 pesos per bag; chocolate at 8 pesos per pound and smaller quantities of onions, eggs and bread.⁴⁴⁰

Smuggling was at an ebb from 1803 to 1810. Nevertheless, the "Mercury" carried on large scale contraband trade with Missions Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo. The figures in Table 14 serve to explain origins of cash reserves at missions and suggest the source of cash donations to the military after 1810.

It should be noted that contraband activity was not an avocation

⁴³⁹ Account book of the "Mercury", William Heath Davis, Captain. November 26, 1806-August 20, 1807, SBMA.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

TABLE 14

OTTERS SOLD AND VALUE OF CASH AND
GOODS RECEIVED IN PAYMENT

| <i>Mission</i> | <i>Otter Skins and Other Provisions</i> | <i>Cash</i> | <i>Goods</i> |
|-----------------|---|-------------|---------------------|
| Santa Barbara | 107 skins..... | \$ 692.00 | \$ 485.38 \$ 329.62 |
| | 6 sheep..... | 18.00 | |
| | Flour..... | 105.00 | |
| | | \$ 815.00 | |
| San Luis Obispo | 300 skins..... | \$2511.50 | \$1447.50 \$1108.00 |
| | 2 bullocks..... | 14.00 | |
| | 4 bags corn..... | 12.00 | |
| | 8 sheep..... | 18.00 | |
| | | \$2555.50 | |
| San Gabriel | 6 skins..... | \$ 58.00 | \$ 58.00 — |

reserved for the missionaries. A number of Indians and the names of prominent Hispanic residents appear in the accounts kept aboard the "Mercury." Names such as Francisco Ortega, Antonio Yorba and Patricio Pico appear in the accounts as well as a large number of unidentifiable persons such as "the farmer" or "old farmer."⁴⁴¹

By 1806 the Russians began to seek alternatives to the contracts made with Yankees whereby the Russians supplied Aleuts, baidarkas and skill, while Yankees contributed ships and an entrance for sea otter pelts into the Chinese market. Starvation brooded over the fledgling colony at Sitka and the bountiful agricultural production of the California missions was the attraction which stimulated the Russian colonists to attempt establishment of an agreement with the Californians rather than Yankees, who antagonized the California colony. In the spring of 1806 the Russian imperial inspector, Nicolai Petrovich Rezanof determined upon a voyage to California for provisions and with the hope of reaching an accord on fur trading. In April the emissaries, including Rezanof himself and the naturalist Langsdorf, dropped anchor in San Francisco Bay. Despite the illegality of the operation, Rezanof and his cargo of trade goods, which he wished to barter for foodstuffs, were well received.

The shrewd Russians whetted the appetites of the missionaries by adroitly displaying their wares. After being so teased, the resistance of the Fathers crumbled, although they insisted upon obtaining the permission of the Governor. Langsdorf wrote, referring to Fathers José Ramón Abella and Martín Landaeta at Mission San Francisco:

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*

They were much pleased with some coarse and fine linen cloths, Russian ticking, and English woolen cloth, which we showed them. They inquired very much after iron and iron wares, particularly tools for mechanical trades and implements for husbandry, household utensils, shears for shearing and iron cooking vessels. Copper kitchen utensils tinned they did not like. They also inquired for casks, bottles, glasses, plates, fine pocket and neck handkerchiefs, and leather of all sorts, particularly calf-skins and leather for the soles of shoes. We had a number of shoes and boots ready made, and round hats, with different articles of clothing, which were very acceptable to them.⁴⁴²

Langsdorf noted that the news of their arrival spread through the country and it reached Mission San José where Father Pedro de la Cuero agreed to provide 104 measures of the best wheat in return for four pieces of English blue cloth and seven pieces of linen subject, of course, to Governor Arrillaga's consent. "It appeared," the Russian commented, "that this was by no means the first time of his being engaged in trade."⁴⁴³

Governor Arrillaga arrived at San Francisco to confer with Rezanof on April 7th. All Rezanof's entreaties met with Arrillaga's sympathy but he insisted that trade was not within his power to approve. He did, however, allow them to be supplied with badly needed foodstuffs furnished by the missions in return for merchandise. Rezanof meanwhile conceived a plan for furthering possibilities of an eventual trade agreement and set his eyes upon the daughter of the San Francisco Commandant, Concepción Argüello, thus beginning the great romance of thwarted love in Hispanic California.⁴⁴⁴

Langsdorf speculated that the Spanish would never agree to Russian cooperation in the sea otter trade and, hence concluded, "if Russia would engage in an advantageous commerce with these parts, and procure from them provisions for the supply of her northern settlements, the only means of doing it is by planting a colony of her own."⁴⁴⁵ At least for this one time, Rezanof was able to obtain the supplies needed to relieve starvation at Sitka. His ship, the "Juno", took on 4,294 measures of corn, with a large quantity of flour, peas, beans, and maize, together with a few casks of salted meat and a small provision of salt, soap, tallow, and some other articles for which the missions were paid in merchandise worth 24,000 pesos.⁴⁴⁶ The missionaries were in favor of expanded trade with the Russians and Father Señán hoped Rezanof would succeed in convincing Spanish authorities of the benefits which would accrue to both parties with free commerce. Concerning this, Señán wrote to the Procurator:

⁴⁴² G. H. Von Langsdorf, *Voyages and Travels in Various Parts of the World During the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806 and 1807*, Part II, London, 1814, 173.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 175-176.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 215.

When he returns to St. Petersburg he intends to beg the Emperor's authorization to go to the court at Madrid as Ambassador Extraordinary. Then he will press for reciprocal trade between their settlements and ours. He expects his proposals to be approved, and if they are, this Province will benefit greatly.⁴⁴⁷

Although, in 1812, the Russians established themselves to the north of San Francisco Bay at Fort Ross, friendlier and closer relations were not forthcoming. They were forbidden to hunt otter in Spanish waters and licit commerce was never permitted. Arrillaga had established a precedent with his handling of the cargo purchased from Rezanof in 1806. While missions had supplied payment in the form of foodstuffs, the Governor had placed the merchandise obtained from the ship in the presidio storehouse. Apparently this practice was continued on a regular basis after 1810. In this way contraband trade with the Russians remained, to a great extent, a monopoly of the military and on both sides it was understood that only on this basis would it be allowed. Governors Arrillaga and Solá used the Russian trade as a means of sustaining the troops. Grain and other foodstuffs needed by the Russians were requisitioned from the missions. Payment was made to missions in drafts on the *Habilitado General* which were worthless after 1810. In 1813, Ivan Kuskof, in command of Fort Ross sent his clerk to San Francisco with a cargo worth 14,000 pesos which was exchanged for foodstuffs. In 1815 the "Suvarov" under Captain Makarof put into San Francisco ostensibly for food and provisions, but ended up selling a large portion of its cargo. The "Ilmen", an American vessel purchased by the Russians, in the years from 1813-1815 sent large quantities of grain, 400 otter skins and 10,000 pesos of money to Sitka. In 1817 Hagemeister, who had replaced Baranof, put in at San Francisco aboard the "Kutusof" with intentions of improving commerce with the Spaniards. Commercial ties were not strengthened, but the Russians were able to exchange their merchandise for approximately 2,000 arrobas of wheat, 142 of barley, 288 of peas and 297 of tallow. Relations were not resumed until 1820 when one, and perhaps two, Russian ships went to Monterey and exchanged their cargoes for grain.⁴⁴⁸

From 1810 to 1820 the shadows of other Russian ships slipped along the California coast, although their identity is now obscure. Certainly many illegal exchanges took place directly with the missionaries, but without knowledge of authorities who generally managed to conduct this trade for the benefit of the troops. Whether trade was conducted with military authorities or surreptitiously with the missions, it is certain that in the final analysis all was paid for with cash and produce from the missions.

⁴⁴⁷ Señán to Father José Viñals, San Buenaventura, June 6, 1806, DML. Trans. in Nathan and Simpson, *Letters of Señán*, 18-19.

⁴⁴⁸ Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 301-320.

Events after 1810 conspired to increase the attractiveness of the California market for prospective Yankee smugglers. Russians, now in possession of ships and in need of supplies for their fur trading empire, found it beneficial to sever their partnership with the Americans. Americans, deprived of bases, skills, and laborers necessary for otter hunting, resorted to the risky but lucrative contraband trade. The incumbent dangers are given ample testimony by the number of Yankees subjected to imprisonment in California and Mexico. The interdiction of the San Blas supply service served to further open California markets to the enterprising smugglers who were quick to grasp the opportunity.

Understandably, smuggling traffic is difficult to assess since no Californian voluntarily left a record of his participation in illegitimate trade. General outlines and trends are discernible, but an evaluation of the extent and value of the trade is impossible. Some smugglers left clear records of their operations, but these were in a minority. Other vessels remain phantoms whose barest outlines are indistinct. The official attitude in California toward smugglers was ambiguous and was calculated to the advantage of the military. Outwardly Governors Arrillaga and Solá were bound by their office to oppose the trade, but the poverty of the troops mediated their opposition. Adelbert Von Chamisso, the naturalist aboard the Russian ship "Rurik", noted that only the smuggling trade, which Governor Solá attempted to suppress, had been able to supply indispensable articles. Also, he commented:

But a little liberty would make California the granary and market of the northern coasts of these seas, and the general resort of the ships which navigate them. Yet California lies without industry, trade and navigation, desert and unpeopled.⁴⁴⁹

Governors' pronouncements were intended for public consumption since an official of the Crown could hardly further his career by supporting illegal trade. It also provided a means of controlling and profiting from the trade while gaining the acquiescence of the missions in paying for it. All trade which did not make use of the Governor as a middle man was driven underground and subjected to possible seizure. If the Governor was approached and conditions met, trade was allowed with an informal understanding that no seizures would be made. Such conditions usually insisted that a portion of the cargo purchased by the missions be released for the support of the troops. The missions had no recourse since complaints to higher authorities would reveal their own activities and would put an end to trade on any basis.

⁴⁴⁹ August Mahr, *The Visit of the Rurik to San Francisco in 1816*, Stanford University, 1932, 35. This ship had left Unalaska on September 14 for California in quest of fresh supplies with which to continue the explorations.

A case in point is that of George Eayrs, Captain of the "Mercury" who made voyages to the California coast in 1812 and again in 1813. His goods were much in demand since his cargo had come from China and included nankeens, silks, crepe, canvas, silk handkerchiefs, rose colored mother-of-pearl, blankets, shawls, rice and pepper. In February of 1812 he anchored off San Luis Obispo studiously avoiding contact with presidios and officials. He was able to exchange \$1,384 worth of goods for fifty-eight otter skins, grain and meat. For much of the year, Eayrs traded successfully along the coast as far south as Cape San Lucas. In May of the next year he attempted a repeat performance. At San Luis Obispo the Fathers traded skins, hogs, calves and vegetables for cloth and other China goods. Disaster fell near Point Concepción a month later when the "Mercury" was taken by Captain Nicolás Noé of the Lima merchantman, "Flora."⁴⁵⁰ Eayrs himself provided a clue to his treatment when he explained his predicament to Benjamin Lamb, one of the owners of the "Mercury."

The very Comedant (sic) of the place who seems the most devoted and has an active part is the very Government officer, who has not long since received pay to admit me to take on board wheat, beef and other provisions, and did use his indeavours (sic) to get me at Monterey for the purpose of supplying the coast.⁴⁵¹

Had Eayrs put in an appearance at Monterey and had he traded with Arrillaga as intermediary, he would have found the risks of contraband trade considerably reduced.

Captain James Smith Wilcox of the schooner "Traveller" put in at Santa Barbara on January 20, 1817 and had little difficulty with California officials. In his first meeting with José de la Guerra he pleaded shortage of provisions. De la Guerra relieved his immediate need but informed him that further trade was contingent upon the Governor's approval. Wilcox obligingly moved up to Monterey where Governor Solá purchased \$700 worth of cloth which he was commissioned to distribute to the four presidios. Armed with a passport from Solá, he had a free ticket for trade. He was allowed much latitude in movement and he ingratiated himself with the missionaries. He transported grain to Loreto and brought beams to Mission Santa Barbara which had been cut on the Channel Islands during the previous year. The only privilege not extended was permission to purchase sea otter pelts. When the "Traveller" was eventually seized by a Lima ship, Solá went to Wilcox's defense.⁴⁵²

⁴⁵⁰ Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade*, 66-67.

⁴⁵¹ Eayrs to Lamb, San Diego, March 9, 1814. Mercury Case Documents in Los Angeles Public Library cited in Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade*, 68. A number of Eayrs letters relating to his capture are printed in Charles F. Lummis, "Mr. Eayrs of Boston," *Out West*, Vol. 30, 1909, 159-166.

⁴⁵² Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 285-287. Also see Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade*, 77-78, and Otto von Kotzebue, *A Voyage of Discovery*, London, 1821, I, 326.

In 1821 Captain Eliza Grimes of the "Eagle" had a similar experience and gave advice for those who would follow. In September Grimes was at Santa Barbara where he cultivated good relations with José de la Guerra. After a sumptuous supper, he plied the *Comandante* with invoices and samples of goods and sold a considerable amount to him. Since Grimes could not now be accused of smuggling without implicating Spanish officials he was free to conduct trade with others. Grimes suggested in his log:

It would be advisable at this place to always deal with the Comdt. in the first instance as in that case he will lay no obstacle in the way of trading with others although he requires a duty of 12½ per cent on all goods not sold to himself. These are free. At this place I sold more goods than I had any reason to calculate on and should no doubt have sold considerable more had I had the articles suited for this market, as many were wanted.⁴⁵³

Contraband trade was prevalent throughout the last decade of Hispanic California and the missionaries were willing accomplices even though they protested innocence to the end. In 1820 Father Payeras wrote to the Procurator, Fray Juan Cortés, denying any trade with foreigners. It had, he alleged, been many years since anyone had visited the coast and if any had come it was for tallow, nothing more.⁴⁵⁴ The evidence, however, proves otherwise. The aftermath of the Bouchard Raid of 1818 revealed great quantities of contraband at *Refugio* including trunks full of silk, boxes of fine cloth, fancy handkerchiefs and piles of silver and gold jewelry. Other eyewitnesses attest to the fact that the padres were urging both Indians and Spaniards to hunt otter as a means of getting needed goods. They taught natives how to build boats and how to capture otters. Trade with Americans was lucrative because they gave thirty pesos exchange value for each otter pelt.⁴⁵⁵

An assessment of the extent and impact of contraband trade upon the missions is beyond the realm of possibility. At least twenty American ships as well as a number of Russian vessels previously mentioned were in good position to conduct trade along the California coast between 1810 and 1821. Evidence suggests that this would be a conservative estimate since many unidentified ships are mentioned particularly from 1817 to 1821. No estimate of the cash value of contraband activity by the missions would be accurate since the evidence upon which to base such a conclusion is unavailable. Since most illegal trade, including that carried on with the military, was ultimately based upon the economy of the missions, an accurate estimate would have to determine what proportion of military requisitions were for local consumption and which were to be used as trade

⁴⁵³ Eliza Grimes, Logbook of the Eagle, 1821-1822. Original in University of California Library, Berkeley. Cited in Ogden, *California Sea Otter Trade*, 81.

⁴⁵⁴ Father Mariano Payeras to Fray Juan Cortés, Purísima, May 22, 1820, SBMA.

⁴⁵⁵ William Heath Davis, *Seventy-Five Years in California*, 252, 200.

goods. Through contraband trade the missions were able to replace their own stipends, salaries of the military and all necessities which had been purchased in Mexico with those funds.

It is not true that the end of government financial support and of the San Blas supply service caused the missions to resort to contraband activity. Smuggling was flourishing long before 1810. The implication is that as early as the 1790's when traders began to appear the two annual supply ships were unable to satisfy the needs of the prospering missions. The supply service could not provide the quantities of goods for which mounting mission surpluses could have supplied payment precisely because it could not provide an adequate outlet for those surpluses. Ironically, almost precisely when government supply ships became inadequate for mission needs, smugglers were available to cover the deficit. It is unwarranted to conclude that missionaries were disloyal by taking advantage of the opportunity. They regarded their primary function, which they felt was also paramount in government policy, to be the Christianization and Hispanicization of natives. Since the expansion of Christianity implied the gathering of ever larger communities of neophytes, it was predicated upon the ability of the mission economy to support those communities. Increased mission population was self-sustaining in providing shelter and increased labor for food production, but these alone did not suffice. Also needed were materials and tools such as iron, cloth, furnishings for church and sanctuary and medicines. Stipends alone were not adequate for increased quantities needed. Credits were needed and could be obtained by trade. When the San Blas service proved inadequate the missionaries turned to illegal trade which they felt enhanced their legitimate function and ultimately furthered the Christianization and Hispanicization of the province. The missionaries felt that the dire situation justified the trade as a necessity for the survival of the province. They would have preferred the trade be legitimized. In 1816 Father Durán at Mission San José regretted that he was not able to send supplies requested by Governor Solá, but he felt the situation could be remedied by opening California ports to foreign trade.

I realize that your orders forbid you to give entrance to any foreign trading ships, but it seems to me that they are suspended because of the grave problems. Would it help if all officials and missionaries signed a petition to the Viceroy? Foreign ships would also relieve the economic need of the troops.⁴⁵⁶

No missionary ever uttered treasonous sentiments nor did any actively support separation of Mexico from Spain and most vehemently opposed the movement.

⁴⁵⁶ Father Durán to Governor Solá, San José, September 22, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

1810 did not mark the beginning of contraband trade but it did result in the economic independence of California from New Spain. This independence was possible because of the prosperity of the missions which financed trade for themselves and their military partners and the proximity of Russians and Yankees who needed what the missions had to sell. While missions have been criticized for their parsimonious attitude toward the troops, it was only through their economic success that the province survived.

Mission Labor



AN ADEQUATE LABOR SUPPLY WAS THE primary requisite for both the economic and spiritual success of missions. Mission sites were selected with much attention to the number of Indians living in the area. The labor supply and success in conversion had an integral and reciprocal relationship. Reduction of Indians into Christian communities required a food supply adequate for a relatively large congregation of people. Production of sufficient foodstuffs demanded many laborers. The relationships between missionization, foodstuffs and labor functioned smoothly once missions had passed the initial starving period and equilibrium had been established between workers and food supply. In early years the problem was critical since upon arrival of the expeditions of 1769 in California there were no congregations of Indians with agricultural skills so necessary for the support of a mission community.

Before the new missions could begin the establishment of neophyte communities, food had to be available for them. Since supplies from San Blas were expected to suffice only for the colonizers, missionization could not begin until fields had been plowed, seed planted and grain harvested, all of which required labor. This problem was anticipated by Serra himself and precautions were taken to provide workers. Soldiers assigned to missions and neophyte Indians who came north from the Lower California missions were expected to provide the initial labor force. The two detachments of the land expedition under Fernando de Rivera y Moncada and Gaspar de Portolá were accompanied by neophytes recruited from the northernmost Lower California missions. Rivera y Moncada's detachment included forty-two neophyte Indians and Portolá's forty-four. Disease and desertion had considerably reduced the initial complement before all expeditions reached San Diego.⁴⁵⁷ According to Fray Juan Crespi who accompanied the Portolá group:

⁴⁵⁷ Donald Eugene Smith and Frederick J. Teggart, "Diary of Gaspar de Portolá During the California Expedition of 1769-1770." Berkeley: *Academy of Pacific Coast History Publications*, I (1910), 21-89.

The number of California Indians who accompanied the land expedition had also been lessened, for five of them died on the road and many deserted and returned to their native land. Only some fourteen of the forty-four who started with the first expedition and some twelve who went with the second reached San Diego.⁴⁵⁸

There was a labor shortage from the beginning. Conflict with the military was exacerbated since mission and presidio competed for labor of the soldiers. It was, in part, lack of workers which prompted Serra's trip to Mexico in 1772. Serra outlined the problems to Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa in May of 1773.⁴⁵⁹ The missions, he said, did not even have sufficient Christianized Indians for their defense and the few adults who had been baptized were obliged to spend their time combing the fields for food. Mission San Carlos on the Carmel had been built only because the soldiers were willing to work. Baptisms there had been few because there was no food to sustain neophytes. Many neophytes absented themselves for weeks in order to search for food, and cow's milk proved to be an insufficient diet. "And although we had no proper answer to make to their complaints," Serra said, "it hurt us all the same." Work at Mission San Antonio was halted when Pedro Fages removed "those soldiers who had been most zealous in carrying out the work they themselves had begun." Father José Cavaller had written to Serra saying "that it could be put down as miraculous that the mission, so devoid of human assistance, was able to continue. If only," the missionary from San Luis Obispo related, "I had a house and some food to give them, I could already have baptized a number of boys and girls." San Gabriel was blessed with fertile soil, running water and plenty of timber. When there were more hands for farm work the mission would prosper. In the face of necessity and because of the laziness of the soldiers, one of the Fathers there had set his own hand to the plow. Mission San Diego had baptized a number of Indians, but with the disapproval of Fages who felt neophytes were being gathered with no means of feeding them and he feared additional strain on the already overburdened food supply. Finally Serra summed up his analysis of the missions.

Most Excellent Sir, the missions, as is clear from what has been said, are still tender plants, and have made little headway, because they are as yet new, and also because they lacked the means.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ Journey of the Second Division of the Land Expedition from Velicatá to San Diego; Father Crespi's Diary in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, II, 40-104.

⁴⁵⁹ Serra to Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa, Mexico City, May 21, 1773, SBMA. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, I, 344-373.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Fray Francisco Palóu, Father President in Serra's absence, pointed to a lack of labor in his report made to Bucareli in December of 1773.⁴⁶¹ Neophytes at San Diego had halted work in order to search for wild food. Neophytes at San Antonio and San Carlos could not stay at the missions because of food shortages. San Luis Obispo and San Gabriel because of fortunate circumstances including fertile soil, plentiful water, neophyte laborers and luck were beginning to solve the deadly cycle of no food; no workers; no mission. One good harvest usually put a mission on a solid basis for future prosperity since the delicate equilibrium between workers and food could be established. San Gabriel had a good harvest in 1773 which sufficed to sustain workers for future harvests. "Consequently," Palóu commented, "they now have enough to make larger plantings, with which to succor the new Christians and feed the heathen."

It is perhaps significant that the four missions established before 1772, San Gabriel had the fewest neophytes in conjunction with the best agricultural land. The harvest, necessary for self-sufficiency, was aided by fertile land which implied less work for each harvest while at the same time the size of the needed harvest was reduced by a relatively small population. It was a fortunate conjunction. San Gabriel had reached the take-off point for continuing self-sufficiency and future expansion.

Serra, in Mexico, was soliciting laborers to be supported at government expense. More soldiers were needed for defense, Serra claimed, but one suspects he also expected that they would add to the mission labor force without drawing from the mission stores.⁴⁶² He requested that peons, familiar with farming be sent from the vicinity of San Blas and that more neophytes be sent from Lower California and that at least two or three families be distributed to each mission. Skilled artisan labor was also necessary. Sharing blacksmiths with presidios had proved unworkable and a source of conflict. Serra requested three blacksmiths and two carpenters with necessary tools. He did not obtain all that he desired, but he did get the peons requested and the blacksmiths and carpenters.⁴⁶³

The solution of the labor problem after 1774 was due only marginally to Serra's efforts in Mexico. The experimentation of the first few years had produced native Californians with skills necessary for agricultural success. This, in turn, enabled the production of large harvests which served to attract neophyte laborers. Serra's report to Bucareli for 1774 confirms

⁴⁶¹ Palóu to Bucareli on the State of the Missions, San Carlos, December 10, 1773. In Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 213-238.

⁴⁶² Serra's *Representación* to Viceroy Bucareli, College of San Fernando, March 13, 1773, in *Ibid.*, III, 3-36.

⁴⁶³ Decision of the Royal Council of War and Exchequer, Mexico, May 6, 1773 in *Ibid.*, III, 37-55. Bucareli to Del Campo Viegol, Mexico, August 4, 1773, AGN. Photograph SBMA.

growing successes.⁴⁶⁴ Missions such as San Gabriel and San Luis Obispo which had experienced a series of good harvests were rapidly increasing in population while ones such as San Diego, which experienced indifferent or poor harvests, grew slowly or remained static. Success did indeed breed further success.

Serra's trip to Mexico did establish once and for all the right of each mission to a *majordomo* drawn from the military guard who was to serve as overseer of the work force and as manager of the economic activities of the mission. It was customary in Lower California for the Fathers of each mission to have a soldier of their choice who acted in this capacity and who usually was not removed from the mission except at the request of the missionaries.⁴⁶⁵ However, Pedro Fages had developed a habit of removing soldiers who became too devoted to the missionaries. Bucareli granted Serra's request. Henceforth, missionaries were entitled to select a soldier to look after farm work and other tasks who could not be removed without serious cause.⁴⁶⁶ In early years there was no specialization in the functions of the *majordomo*. It was his job to assign Indians their tasks each morning, oversee livestock and agriculture, supervise workshops and report to the missionary in charge of temporal affairs. As missions matured and diversified, civilians were employed to assume some of the functions once performed by *majordomos*. Artisans were at first provided by the government and later hired by the missions to instruct and oversee neophytes in the development of a particular skill. Geographical expansion necessitated the hiring of men to oversee distant herds and fields while a separate *majordomo* would be assigned to the house.

The contract between *majordomo* and mission, even though he was a member of the military, was a purely civil contract and its terms were not interfered with by the military commandant. The actual appointment was made by the Governor, but only on the recommendation of the missionaries. Salaries were usually paid in kind plus a stipulated amount of cash, usually 5 to 10 pesos monthly. In the case of military who continued in the service of the mission after their term of enlistment was up, the cash payment was usually increased. The soldier José de Santa Ana Avila's employment record at Mission Santa Barbara is typical.⁴⁶⁷ Before his retirement from the military in 1801 he had served as *majordomo* on the

⁴⁶⁴ Serra to Viceroy Bucareli, Monterey, February 5, 1775, AGN. Provincias Internas, Tomo 166. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 222-247.

⁴⁶⁵ Serra's *Representación* to Viceroy Bucareli, College of San Fernando, March 13, 1773, in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 3-36.

⁴⁶⁶ Decision of the Royal Council of War and Exchequer, Mexico, May 6, 1773, in *Ibid.*, III, 37-55.

⁴⁶⁷ Accounts of Mission Santa Barbara, 1794-1805, Mission Santa Barbara, SBMA.

following terms. He was given six steers annually, an arroba of tallow and 4 reales worth of candles monthly and three almuds of corn and an almud of beans weekly. His contract further stipulated that upon his military retirement he was to be paid twelve pesos monthly. In 1801 he began to serve as an *inválido*, and his problems began. In October of 1802 he had overdrawn 48 pesos, 1 real, 7 granos which was forgiven through the kindness of the missionaries. In 1802 the missionaries negotiated a new contract with Avila which was to his advantage. To his monthly ration was added an arroba of flour and a sheep. As a symbol of his and the mission success he was given a man servant. Señor Avila served the mission at least through 1805. It was characteristic of these employees to be perennially in debt to the mission, although no advantage was taken of such a situation by missionaries and it does not appear to have been a calculated policy. Señor Tomás Espinosa was hired as *majordomo* by Mission Purísima with a typical contract in 1809 and by the end of the year owed 139 pesos, 7 reales.⁴⁶⁸ In 1810 his debt rose to 178 pesos but he was rehired with the proviso that he could not spend more than he earned and one hundred pesos of his debt was forgiven. All promises were forgotten and by the end of 1812 he owed 130 pesos, 6 reales. In that year he left mission employment owing 100 pesos.

As missions expanded similar contracts were made for all kinds of work. At times people were hired on a year-to-year basis while others were taken on for a specific job or limited time period such as a month. Mission Purísima hired a soldier's widow, Señora Guadalupe Briones, in 1818 to nurse the sick for which she was to be compensated with her food and five pesos monthly.⁴⁶⁹ In February of 1819 José Dolores Ortega served Mission Santa Barbara for one month in return for six pesos and rations.⁴⁷⁰

Artisan instructors for the neophytes were unknown in California until 1792. This was reflected in the rude state of manufacturing. Outside of the few blacksmiths and carpenters assigned to presidios and missions there were no skilled artisans before 1792, although occasionally a soldier or settler was available who had a skill. A mason was in California in 1786. Fray Vicente Fuster at Mission San Juan Capistrano requested Governor Borica's permission for the mason's aid in building a church.

In 1789, Viceroy Revilla Gigedo, at the suggestion of Pedro Fages, sent a list of recommendations to the King including a suggestion that blacksmiths carpenters and stonemasons be sent to work at the mis-

⁴⁶⁸ Account Book of Mission Purísima, 1806-1834. Transcribed by Lewis G. Thomas, Berkeley, 1938, SBMA, 59.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁴⁷⁰ Accounts of Mission Santa Barbara, 1816-1822, SBMA.

sions.⁴⁷¹ Increasing prosperity demanded more substantial buildings and amenities which only skilled craftsmen could supply. It was these artisans transported and paid at royal expense who imparted to the missions that style which is now so closely identified with them. Buildings were rebuilt incorporating roof tiles and adobe instead of the tule and mud construction typical of frontier California. Fountains, patios, archways and additional rooms were constructed. Even more significant were new wells, irrigation systems, plows and tools. Huts of neophytes were gradually converted to adobe and were fitted with pots, pans, grinding stones and even small ovens for baking. Many were supplied with windows and doors, a luxury envied by presidio and pueblo alike.⁴⁷²

The bullwork of the renovation was done by the neophytes with the artisans planning and overseeing the work. Neophytes learned to make adobes and the stone and floor tiles used to improve their own huts which La Perouse described as being so wretched that their only value was that they could be burned when fleas became unbearable.⁴⁷³

In 1790 twenty artisans were sent by the Viceroy to be distributed among the missions to teach their respective skills. The artisans were sent on four or five year contracts with a pay scale going as high as 1,000 pesos per year for some masters and 300 to 600 pesos for journeymen. The contingent sent from Mexico included masons, a potter, millmaker, carpenters, tanners, shoemaker, tailors, blacksmiths, weavers, a ribbon maker and two saddlers. It has been specified that all craftsmen should be masters and should bring their tools with them, but upon receiving the list of artisans from interim Governor José Argüello, Lasuén discovered that many were journeymen and neither carpenter, tanner, blacksmith, master mason nor stonecutter had brought tools with which to ply his trade.⁴⁷⁴

The artisans were to move from mission to mission instructing neophytes rather than attempting prolonged projects themselves. Food supplies were provided by missions but were charged to the nearest *Habilitación*. In 1794 Mission San Carlos charged the Presidio at Monterey 327 pesos for supplies given to artisans. Five artisans; Manuel Ruíz, Santiago Ruíz, Pedro Alcantaro, Antonio Henríquez and Pedro Gonzáles were assigned to Mission San Carlos in 1795 from which they drew 340

⁴⁷¹ Fages' Report on the California Missions, 1787, BL. State Papers, Mission and Colonization, I. Phs. SBMA. Revilla Gígedo to the King, Mexico, November 26, 1789, AGI, Guadalajara, 587.

⁴⁷² Lasuén, Refutation of Charges, San Carlos, June 19, 1801, SBMA. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, II, 294-234.

⁴⁷³ La Perouse, *A Voyage Round the World*, Vol. I, 447.

⁴⁷⁴ Lasuén to Don José Argüello, San Carlos, November 27, 1792, BL., CA-54. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, Vol. I, 258-259. Also see Charles Chapman, "A Great Franciscan in California: Fermín Francisco de Lasuén," *Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 5, 1919, 131-155.

pesos, 5 reales worth of supplies which were charged to the presidio at Monterey. The following year the mission provided 191 pesos worth of provisions to Manuel Ruíz, a mason who had been assigned to the mission.⁴⁷⁵

In 1792, Antonio Domingo Henríquez, master weaver, moved up the coast from San Diego, making spinning wheels, looms, combs and all necessary implements with the exception of wool cards which were ordered from New Spain. Under his guidance, neophytes learned to use the equipment and wove woolen cloth, blankets, and Franciscan coarse cloth. At several missions Henríquez taught Indians to weave cotton shirting. The success of this venture prompted Lasuén to request several more weavers, a few looms and some indigo dye, in addition to a master fuller who could oversee the final finishing of coarse wool and closely woven goods.⁴⁷⁶ Henríquez, who had a deserved reputation for heavy drinking, proved to be a valuable asset to the missions. He eventually married an Indian woman from San Diego and succeeded in overcoming his penchant for alcohol. His contract was extended for four years in 1794, but on July 3, 1797, he asked Governor Borica for permission to retire because of ill health and advanced age and his petition was granted.⁴⁷⁷

Other artisans proved to be as successful and invaluable as Henríquez. Master mason Estevan Ruíz was highly praised by Lasuén. He had been assigned to San Carlos in the distribution of artisans ordered by Viceroy Revilla Gigedo in 1792. The mason had been so successful in constructing a church and in teaching his trade to the neophytes that in 1794 Lasuén asked Borica to extend his contract for another year and a half. Borica agreed.⁴⁷⁸

The effects of the government education program were immediately apparent. In 1792 George Vancouver noted that Mission San Fernando had crude looms which performed tolerably well in the production of coarse cloth made from domestic wool. The cloth produced by the neophytes was good although it lacked fulling. Vancouver went on to note that the processing and weaving of wool was carried out by women and girls who were already clothed in the fruits of their labor.⁴⁷⁹

The program did not work out so well in every instance. Mariano

⁴⁷⁵ Monterey Presidio Account, December, 1794, signed by Argüello, AASF. Phs. SBMA. Monterey Presidio Account, December 31, 1795, signed by Argüello, AASF. Phs. SBMA. Monterey Presidio Account, December 31, 1796, Signed by José Pérez Fernández, AASF. Phs. SBMA. For names of artisans sent in 1792 see Bancroft, *History of California*, I, 615.

⁴⁷⁶ Lasuén to José Joaquín de Arrillaga, San Carlos, December 21, 1792, AASF. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, I, 263-264.

⁴⁷⁷ Petition of Antonio Domingo Henríquez, Monterey, July 3, 1797, AGN. Californias 6.

⁴⁷⁸ Lasuén to Don Diego Borica, San Carlos, December 10, 1794, SBMA.

⁴⁷⁹ Marguerite Eyer Wilbur, ed., *Vancouver in California 1792-1794*, Los Angeles, 1951, 42.

Tapinto and Joaquín Botella, tailors, were so unsatisfactory that Lasuén informed Governor Arrillaga that he was not giving them assignments because "they are not what we are looking for." There was no need of their craft and the little that the Indians would be able to pick up would be quickly forgotten for lack of practice. Lasuén revealed his distaste for the two tailors when he informed Arrillaga that:

If you think it advisable, Your Grace may request two or more tailors who are men of good conduct, and suitable for teaching. To them could be assigned a number of missions and a group of boys, on the understanding that they are to travel and move from one mission to another, bringing their apprentices with them.⁴⁸⁰

In this fashion every mission could have the benefit of the artisans' work while at the same time boys from each mission would have a prolonged period of training.

Generally the efforts of the artisans were successful. By 1795 they had instructed a large number of neophytes in crafts. By the end of 1793 six Indian shoemakers and carpenters from Mission San Francisco were assigned as instructors at Santa Clara. Eight neophytes at Mission San Carlos were trained as carpenters, eleven as stonemasons and two as blacksmiths. Weaving, tanning and leatherwork were pursued at all missions except Soledad.⁴⁸¹

Free training for neophytes was not to endure for long. The contracts of the original group of artisans began to expire in 1795 and Governor Borica requested a new contingent from the Viceroy. The Viceroy, pleading financial necessity, supplied only four. The first artisans had been subsidized by the Royal Treasury, but in 1794 it was declared that one-half of the exchange value of the work performed was to be paid to the government. The second was to be divided into three equal parts; one to go to the artisan and the other two to his apprentices.⁴⁸² The system was further altered in 1796 in order to return more of the expenditures to the treasury. In December of that year new instructions came from the Viceroy.

I have determined, in conformity with the opinions of the fiscal of the Royal treasury, that the labor or work of the contract teacher must be paid to the Royal treasury, save that one-eighth should be deducted and paid to the person concerned, because the King does not pay the wages in order that the master mechanic should serve for the convenience of the missions, but that he might have apprentices and so teach Indian neophytes.⁴⁸³

⁴⁸⁰ Lasuén to José Joaquín Arrillaga, San Carlos, December 21, 1792, AASF. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, I, 262-264.

⁴⁸¹ Guest, *Fernán Francisco de Lasuén*, 302.

⁴⁸² Lasuén to José Joaquín de Arrillaga, San Carlos, June 7, 1794, AASF. Trans. by Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, I, 307.

⁴⁸³ Viceroy Branciforte to Lasuén, Mexico, December 20, 1796, SBMA.

Although the government continued to pay artisans salaries, in fact, missions were expected to return the investment. The only remedy for the missions, which at this time had little or no cash, was to assign artisans to presidios and send neophytes there for instruction. Lasuén found the implication distasteful. The Viceroy had insinuated that the missionaries were using artisans as cheap skilled labor rather than as instructors of neophytes. He informed Viceroy Branciforte in diplomatic fashion that artisans had always been engaged in instructing neophytes. Lasuén was disgusted at the thought of sending neophytes to the presidios, but agreed to comply.⁴⁸⁴ Earlier he had told the missionaries to send four boys from each mission to the nearest presidio for instruction, "but with the purpose of disillusioning the government in a practical way so that it may be made clear that the economic project of the Royal Treasury nullifies the objective of the King."⁴⁸⁵ The Father President preferred no artisan instructors at all rather than sending neophytes to the presidios. Lasuén refused either to accept artisans at the missions or to send neophytes for instruction. His worst suspicions were confirmed when in lieu of artisan apprentices, Borica requested male and female servants.⁴⁸⁶ Lasuén felt that the Governor's real intentions had been revealed.

In order to circumvent payments to the Royal Treasury, missionaries apparently made certain that no work was done for missions by artisans and neophytes whether at presidios or missions. All items manufactured in the course of instruction were for military use. Only in this way could missions escape the burden of artisan salaries. Father Vicente Fuster informed Governor Borica of amounts owed by the military for goods produced for the military by the weaver Mariano Mendoza who worked at Mission San Juan Capistrano. Mendoza and neophyte apprentices had produced seventy-eight varas of carpet for the church; thirty varas of cord for sleeves of *vaqueros*; eighty half-blankets for the Presidio of Santa Barbara; forty blankets; thirty varas of cotton cloth and thirty varas of coarse cloth.⁴⁸⁷ Borica refused to assume the burden of payment to the Royal Treasury, although he agreed to pay in a convoluted fashion.⁴⁸⁸ The mission would have to make payment in Mexico through the College of San Fernando. Borica agreed to pay the mission with a credit against the *Habilitación* at San Diego.

⁴⁸⁴ Lasuén to Viceroy Branciforte, San Carlos, April 26, 1797, AGN. Californias, 49, part 2. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, II, 19-20.

⁴⁸⁵ Lasuén to the Missionaries, San Carlos, July 28, 1796, SBMA.

⁴⁸⁶ Lasuén to Fray Antonio Nogueyra, San Carlos, August 21, 1796, AGN, DHM. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, I, 393-396.

⁴⁸⁷ Fray Vicente Fuster to Borica, San Juan Capistrano, March 31, 1797. Englehardt Transcript, SBMA.

⁴⁸⁸ Borica to the Missionaries of San Juan Capistrano, Monterey, June 26, 1797. Englehardt Transcript, SBMA.

Miguel José de Azanza replaced Branciforte as Viceroy of New Spain on May 31, 1798. He proposed to settle arguments over artisan instructors to the satisfaction of all. An identical letter was directed both to Borica and Lasuén in which the Viceroy informed them that, "it would be more sensible to send the artisans to the missions in order to teach trades to the neophytes."⁴⁸⁹ Father President and Governor were told to come to a mutually acceptable solution. Borica, meanwhile, had resigned and no replacement had arrived. Lasuén, unable to take any other action, gave the Viceroy his thoughts on the matter. The missions were in the position of having to supply apprentices and raw material to the artisans. Products of artisan labor had no market for sale and yet salaries had to be paid. With this in mind he concluded that perhaps it was not in the interest of the missions to have artisans. In short, artisans were welcome at the missions but salaries could not be paid.⁴⁹⁰ The implication of the entire controversy is the unwillingness of missions to pay for services rendered by the Government. It was not so simple. The missions at this stage of development had neither credit nor cash with which to pay salaries of up to 1,000 pesos per artisan. It was the very skills which artisans taught which gradually enabled missions to build up cash reserves and credit.

Meanwhile contracts expired and most artisans returned to Mexico, although a few remained. A pool of well-trained neophytes had been created by the program and could be depended upon by both missions and presidios. Skilled instructors from Mexico represented only a temporary, although significant, exception to the otherwise all Indian labor force of the missions. Artisans who remained in California were employed by missions on terms similar to those extended to *majordomos*. Master carpenter José Antonio Ramírez was hired by Mission Santa Barbara in August of 1800. He was to be paid one peso for each day he worked, two pounds of chocolate each month and meals were provided. Like other contract labor at the missions, he was always in debt, but for only a few pesos.⁴⁹¹ Señor Francisco Garcia and his wife, Doña María Luisa, were hired by Mission Santa Barbara in 1820 as a husband and wife team, "she to work in the infirmary and he as a locksmith, faithfully to serve this mission, agreeing to do all that is necessary and requested for the mission." They shared an annual salary of 200 pesos and received weekly in addition: four almuds of maize, an almud of beans, six candles and as a monthly stipend they were given a peso of soap, a quarter steer and were provided with a servant.⁴⁹² Other missions also contracted for skilled labor.

⁴⁸⁹ Viceroy Miguel José de Azanza to Lasuén, Mexico, September 21, 1799, SBMA.

⁴⁹⁰ Lasuén to Viceroy Azanza, San Luis Obispo, January 22, 1800, AGN. Californias 46, Part 2. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, II, 145-148.

⁴⁹¹ Accounts of Mission Santa Barbara, 1794-1805, SBMA.

⁴⁹² Accounts of Mission Santa Barbara, 1816-1822, SBMA.

In April of 1811, José Antonio Ramírez removed to Mission Purísima and was employed with a contract. It was stipulated that:

He binds himself to assist in making the stone basins, canals and all washing places and drinking troughs after finishing the fountain and besides to direct the carpenter work. He will be paid 200 pesos in silver, with board, three drinks per day and two pounds of chocolate monthly.⁴⁹³

After 1810 foreigners, mainly Americans, trickled into California as contacts with smugglers became more frequent. Some who decided to remain possessed skills valuable to the missions and were hired by them although they were cautiously watched by the Governor. Father Luis Antonio Martínez wrote to Governor Solá in March of 1816 requesting the services of an Irish weaver named Henry who was being held in Monterey.⁴⁹⁴ Martínez was disappointed since the weaver was sent to Mission San Miguel instead of San Luis Obispo.⁴⁹⁵ In July of 1816 Father Viader at Santa Clara wrote to Solá complaining that "the American, Joaquín, who is engaged at this mission at making wheels for the cart and actually doing that with the work well advanced has been ordered by the Commandant of San Francisco to go there immediately accompanied by a soldier."⁴⁹⁶ Solá wrote to the Commandant and ordered that "the American Joaquín not leave Santa Clara without his permission."⁴⁹⁷ An American "Felipe Santiago" was at Mission San Juan Bautista helping to design and build an altar for the chapel at Monterey.⁴⁹⁸ Joseph Chapman, captured in the course of the Bouchard invasion, was much in demand at the missions. At various times Chapman passed himself off as blacksmith, carpenter and surgeon. In 1820 he was employed as a blacksmith and carpenter at Mission Santa Inés where he was credited with building a gristmill.⁴⁹⁹ Numerically white skilled labor was insignificant in Hispanic California. Once they had received training it was the Indians who performed the bulk of the labor, both skilled and unskilled.

Indian artisans are mentioned much more frequently in the docu-

⁴⁹³ Account Book of Mission Purísima, 1806-1834, 88-89, SBMA.

⁴⁹⁴ Fray Luis Antonio Martínez to Solá, San Luis Obispo, March 22, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA. Exactly who this Henry was is indeterminable. There was one Irishman in California at the time by the name of Juan María Romero. See Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 276 fn.

⁴⁹⁵ Fray Luis Antonio Martínez to Solá, San Luis Obispo, March 31, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

⁴⁹⁶ Fray José Viader to Solá, Santa Clara, July 24, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA. I can find no clue as to the identity of the American, Joaquín.

⁴⁹⁷ Solá to Viader, Monterey, July 28, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

⁴⁹⁸ Fray Estevan Tapis to Solá, San Juan Bautista, October 12, 1818, AASF. Phs. SBMA. Felipe Santiago was most probably Thomas Doak, an American who had been captured with the ship "Albatross" under Captain William Smith. See Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 275 fn. In the same volume see Pioneer Register and index, 781.

⁴⁹⁹ Fray Francisco Xavier Uría to Solá, Santa Inés, December 19, 1820, AASF. Phs. SBMA. See Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 757.

ments than Anglo, Irish or Hispanic craftsmen. Although motifs drawn from Spain and New Spain were incorporated into mission construction, there is no doubt that missions were primarily the creation of Indian neophytes. Indian influence and creativity extended beyond the confines of the mission and it was their labor which constructed presidio buildings and private residences. Without them the economy of Hispanic California would have remained at a bare subsistence level. After 1810 Indians supported themselves in the missions as well as supporting the military establishment. All of the manufactured products sent from missions to presidios were products of Indian labor. The arts practiced by Indian neophytes encompassed most of those in New Spain. In 1816 Mission San Juan Bautista had carpenters, shoemakers, cowboys, blacksmiths, tanners, weavers and tilemakers.⁵⁰⁰ By 1821 missions of the Monterey district provided eight carpenters and twelve woodcutters for the rebuilding of the presidio. Examples could continue but it is evident that Hispanic California was a monument to the effectiveness and skill of Indian labor.

Labor was the key to the economic success of the California missions. Missions with only a few Indians could exist as religious institutions, but not as economically significant enterprises. Mission population statistics suggest that after the beginning of the nineteenth century the neophyte labor supply was in crisis. Table 15 points to the fact that mission population of 1805 was not exceeded until 1817, indicating lower numbers of baptisms or neophytes being brought into missions and an accelerating death rate. In 1803 baptisms for the year totaled 4,259, a figure which was not reached again. From 1805 to 1821 baptisms totaled 31,795 while deaths were 27,590. Population during the same period shows a net increase of only 894 with the discrepancy being approximately accounted for by desertions which became a serious problem. The population problem had two origins, the first of which was that many older missions were simply running out of neophytes to baptize. Declining baptisms combined with the high death rate insured that by 1821 only six missions, San Diego, San Luis Rey, San Gabriel, San José, Santa Clara and San Juan Bautista had not passed the peak of their populations. From an early date, the end of the missions as religious and economic institutions could have been seen.⁵⁰¹

The experience of Mission Santa Barbara vividly illustrates this unintentional life cycle. As early as 1801 Indian villages in the immediate vicinity of the mission had disappeared due to neophytes brought into the mission and deaths. The last Indian from the Goleta area was baptized in

⁵⁰⁰ Father Estevan Tapis to Governor Solá, San Juan Bautista, May 15, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

⁵⁰¹ Figures were derived from State of the Missions for the years 1800-1821, SBMA.

TABLE 15
MISSION POPULATION 1785-1821*

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Baptisms</i> | <i>Deaths</i> | <i>Living</i> | <i>Deaths/100 Living</i> |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| 1785 | 965 | 433 | 5,123 | 8 |
| 1786 | 796 | 434 | 5,451 | 7 |
| 1787 | 1,015 | 346 | 6,190 | 5 |
| 1788 | 1,063 | 458 | 6,750 | 6 |
| 1791 | 1,527 | 745 | 8,425 | 8 |
| 1792 | 1,328 | 788 | 9,031 | 8 |
| 1793 | 1,364 | 619 | 9,605 | 6 |
| 1794 | 1,747 | 933 | 10,515 | 8 |
| 1795 | 1,503 | 755 | 11,025 | 6 |
| 1796 | 1,307 | 1,090 | 11,216 | 9 |
| 1797 | 1,790 | 1,700 | 12,399 | 13 |
| 1798 | 1,995 | 658 | 12,922 | 5 |
| 1799 | 1,469 | 1,301 | 13,085 | 9 |
| 1800 | 1,906 | 1,275 | 13,688 | 9 |
| 1801 | 2,485 | 1,339 | 14,780 | 9 |
| 1802 | 2,419 | 1,501 | 15,562 | 9 |
| 1803 | 4,259 | 1,600 | 18,185 | 8 |
| 1804 | 2,695 | 1,740 | 19,099 | 9 |
| 1805 | 3,155 | 1,573 | 20,372 | 7 |
| 1806 | 1,648 | 3,265 | 18,727 | 17 |
| 1807 | 1,380 | 1,466 | 18,713 | 7 |
| 1808 | 1,954 | 1,403 | 18,598 | 7 |
| 1809 | 845 | 1,277 | 18,535 | 6 |
| 1810 | 1,778 | 561 | 18,770 | 2 |
| 1811 | 1,536 | 2,328 | 19,677 | 11 |
| 1812 | 1,898 | 1,602 | 20,002 | 8 |
| 1813 | 1,464 | 1,463 | 19,891 | 7 |
| 1814 | 1,338 | 1,395 | 19,678 | 7 |
| 1815 | 1,720 | 1,714 | 19,467 | 8 |
| 1816 | 2,157 | 1,690 | 19,862 | 8 |
| 1817 | 2,131 | 1,695 | 20,238 | 8 |
| 1818 | 1,682 | 1,673 | 20,086 | 8 |
| 1819 | 1,861 | 1,475 | 20,004 | 7 |
| 1820 | 1,931 | 1,492 | 20,473 | 7 |
| 1821 | 2,316 | 1,518 | 21,196 | 7 |

* Figures were derived from State of the Missions for the years 1785-1821. Annual Reports give only totals of baptisms and deaths from the founding of each mission. Annual totals were derived by subtracting totals to date from previous year. Since the report for 1789 is missing, no figures are available for that year or 1790. Figures are not consistent from year to year because of desertions and inaccurate record keeping.

1805 which hence marks the year in which this old and large Indian center was extinguished. By 1812 all Indians along the coast between Rincón and Gaviota had been drawn to the mission, those of the mountain country by 1822 and those of the Channel Islands by 1828. By 1828 all Indian villages of the area had ceased to exist and the task of missionization accomplished forty-one years after the founding of the mission. After 1802 the number of baptisms per year began to decline at Santa Barbara and in 1803 the population of the mission began an unending period of decline. Declining baptisms were a major factor in declining population.⁵⁰²

The second factor was the accelerating death rate. Various factors have been blamed for high infant and adult mortality. The mission system itself has been blamed. It has been claimed that due to a nutritionally deficient diet, Indians were subjected to malnutrition which led to a weakening of them physically and to a high susceptibility to disease and a lowering of the birth rate.⁵⁰³ No information exists to unequivocally refute or confirm this hypothesis.

While faulty nutrition may indeed have been present, its existence is not essential for an explanation of the high rate of mortality. European diseases to which Indians had little or no resistance must take the blame. Indian populations in all parts of the Americas were reduced drastically by disease after conquest and plenty of evidence exists to suggest the same phenomenon in California. The effects of any epidemic were magnified many times by communal contact among Indians living at missions.

In 1804 and 1805 a physician, José María Benites, was sent to California to report on diseases responsible for the alarming death rate.⁵⁰⁴ Benites outlined diseases and causes and submitted them to the Viceroy. The most deadly were dysentery, fevers, pleurisy, humid climate with fog and cold, too little blood, pneumonia, viruses and last, but perhaps most important, syphilis. The appalling mortality was noticed by visitors. According to William Shaler in 1804, the padres didn't seem to know even the rudiments of medicine.⁵⁰⁵ In 1806 Langsdorf commented upon the lack of adequate medical knowledge. The only physician and only surgeon in the province were assigned to the military at Monterey. The Indians of the missions were without medical assistance and were often

⁵⁰² Maynard Geiger, *The Indians of Mission Santa Barbara*, Santa Barbara, 1960, 15-18.

⁵⁰³ See for example, Sherburne F. Cook, "The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization," *Ibero-Americana*, Vol. 21, 1943, 1-161.

⁵⁰⁴ *Expediente* on diseases of the Indians by José María Benites, Monterey, January 1, 1805, SBMA.

⁵⁰⁵ Shaler, *Journal of a Voyage*, 57-59.

attacked with fevers and were of such weak constitutions that great numbers died. Further, he said:

It is very possible, that in their former mode of life they were rarely ill, but the great change in their habits, the different kind of nourishment they now take, their being constrained to labour much more constantly than before, with other circumstances, may have operated powerfully upon their constitutions. The ecclesiastics complain that upon the least illness the Indians become wholly downcast and dejected, and giving themselves up to this depression of spirits, will not observe the diet or anything else recommended for their recovery.⁵⁰⁶

Smallpox, Langsdorf noted, was not prevalent. This he attributed to the widespread cowpox which was used for inoculation. Dr. Benites had meanwhile made his report to the Viceroy who relayed orders through Bishop Rousset of Sonora to the effect that all help should be given to alleviate the sickness of the patients. Father President Tapis promised to cooperate fully with the doctor.⁵⁰⁷

Despite concern and good intentions, diseases continued to run rampant. In 1806-1807 a particularly deadly epidemic of measles decimated the neophyte population. Father Mariano Payeras wrote from Purísima that many Indians were dying from a violent dysentery associated with measles.⁵⁰⁸ A few months later he commented that, although the wheat harvest was mediocre:

It is not so bad since the measles with its results has cleaned out the missions and filled the cemeteries. Here it carried off from us 150 Indians.⁵⁰⁹

In his biennial report made in 1807, Father Tapis commented that 372 Indians had died from measles, a disease which had been unknown in California until 1805. Since then it had ravaged both gentiles and neophytes.⁵¹⁰

When Indian workers were requested for work at presidios, a common reply became that there were not even enough healthy neophytes to perform necessary tasks at the missions. In 1816 Adelbert von Chamisso recorded his observation upon Indian mortality. "The Indians," he said, "died in the missions, in an alarming and increasing proportion." He found no medical assistance except bleeding which was used on every occasion and was "more fatal than advantageous." Chamisso referred

⁵⁰⁶ Langsdorf, *Voyages*, 208-209.

⁵⁰⁷ Bishop Rousset to Tapis, Culiacán, September 26, 1805, SBMA. Tapis to Rousset, Soledad, December 2, 1805, SBMA.

⁵⁰⁸ Payeras to Fray Tomás de la Peña, Purísima, March 1, 1806, AGN. Historia de Mexico, Primera serie, Tomo 2 Transcript SBMA.

⁵⁰⁹ Payeras to Fray Josef Viñals, Purísima, July 2, 1806, AGN. Historia de Mexico, Primera Serie, Tomo 2.

⁵¹⁰ Noticia de las Misiones by Fray Estevan Tapis for 1805-1806, San Carlos, March 13, 1807, SBMA.

cryptically, but unmistakably, to venereal disease which carried off its victims without opposition. It was also common among Indians not resident at missions, although they were not dying with such rapidity. Meanwhile, white population was able to naturally increase.⁵¹¹

In the same year Father Sarriá noted widespread outbreaks of venereal disease.⁵¹² Governor Solá informed the Viceroy of this disease which was of epidemic proportions.⁵¹³ Fray Francisco Suñer attempted to discover causes for diseases of neophytes. Part of the problem, he suggested, was natural indolence which caused them to act sick. He felt that wool garments were not conducive to good health. He was probably right since clothes were rarely washed and wool was home for many disease carrying vermin. Fornication was cited since it naturally communicated venereal disease. Overall he blamed generally filthy conditions.⁵¹⁴ In 1820 Father Payeras wrote a remorseful letter to the College of San Fernando in which he expressed his inability to understand why Indians experienced high mortality.

The Indian population is declining. They live well free but as soon as we reduce them to a Christian and community life they decline in health, they fatten, sicken and die. It particularly affects women. It is the sorrowful experience of 51 years that the Indians live poorly in the missions. Even when they remain healthy the women lose fertility and their sterility can scarcely be determined from annual reports because in most areas of the province they are still baptizing gentiles, one is confused with the other and the total always increases.

In all missions they have built hospitals, have bought potions and have acquired medicines from the surgeons of the province, and from books. They have procured the best *curanderos* and *curanderas*. It all forms a somber calculation of diminution. The decline of the population has seemed so notable since I have not known in twenty-four years more than two epidemics among the race, that of 1801 and the measles of 1806.⁵¹⁵

A letter written by Payeras to Fray Baldomero López, Guardian of the College, in which he echoes a plea for medication for syphilitic neophytes suggests that venereal disease was a prime cause for debilitation of Indians.⁵¹⁶ Syphilis, introduced by single soldiers, was probably the major cause of mortality and declining birth rates since it caused sterility and was passed on congenitally. In addition, lead extract, often used as a curative, caused illness and death over a prolonged period.

⁵¹¹ August C. Mahr, *The Visit of the "Rurik" to San Francisco in 1816*, Stanford University, 1932, 83.

⁵¹² Fray Vicente Sarriá to Solá, Purísima, June 28, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

⁵¹³ Solá to the Viceroy, Monterey, August 21, 1816, SBMA.

⁵¹⁴ Fray Francisco Suñer to Solá, Santa Barbara, August 6, 1817, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

⁵¹⁵ Payeras to the College of San Fernando, Purísima, February 2, 1820. Engelhardt Transcript, SBMA.

⁵¹⁶ Payeras to Fray Baldomero López, Purísima, July 26, 1820. Engelhardt Transcript, SBMA.

While missions appeared to prosper between 1800 and 1821, expansion was no longer possible since the labor supply could not be increased due to high mortality. Outwardly prosperity undreamed of by Serra brought Hispanic California to the peak of its development. Artisans provided amenities of life while foreigners provided those things which could not be produced. In the mortality of Indians was the germ of future decline. As soon as the rate of baptisms declined, which it did, the missions would be broken as economic institutions.

Mission Agriculture



IN 1821, THE FINAL YEAR OF HISPANIC CALIFORNIA, the twenty missions harvested 79,740 fanegas of wheat, 14,141 of barley, 22,084 of maize, 4,850 of beans, 264 of chickpeas, 1,277 of peas and 763 of kidney beans. Mission herds included 14,973 cattle, 193,234 sheep, 1,469 goats, 1,633 swine, 14,058 mares and colts, 5,772 tame horses and 2,011 mules.⁵¹⁷ Certainly this was an impressive total for fifty years of labor. Successes in agriculture and livestock production were the foundations which supported mission expansion into other areas of economic endeavor. Trade, industry and manufacturing would have been impossible without firm support from agricultural and pastoral success. A food surplus was necessary to release workers for other tasks and trade required excess products which could be traded for ones having more utilitarian value to inhabitants of Alta California. Not only did these successes support further mission expansion, but they also made the continued existence of Hispanic California possible after 1810.

The statistics of 1821 could not have been foreseen nor predicted by the hardy pioneers of 1769 to whom survival was a daily struggle. A scant supply of seeds and a few animals were not conducive to an overly optimistic beginning. Alta California's small initial endowment of livestock and seed was determined by José de Gálvez who ordered in 1768 that the expeditions were to take seeds of all kinds. The Baja California missions were called upon to supply 200 head of cattle in addition to mules and horses. The first land expedition left Velicatá under the command of Captain Rivera y Moncada on March 24, 1769 and was burdened with the bulk of the supplies and livestock ordered by Gálvez which included 187 mules, 53 horses and 204 head of cattle with an uncounted number of calves.⁵¹⁸ The first vessel of the colonizing expedition, the "San Antonio", arrived off the California coast in April of 1769 and in May all four

⁵¹⁷ Estado de las Misiones de la Alta California sacado de las ynformes de las Misiones en fin de Diciembre de 1821 signed by José Señan, SBMA.

⁵¹⁸ *Expediente* of Articles and Animals taken from the missions of Lower California to those of Upper California, Loreto, January 7, 1772. Copy as of May 8, 1773 in AGN. Californias Vol. 43. Phs. SBMA. A somewhat variant list is contained in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, I, 50-52.

components were united at San Diego. The settlement for which such auspicious beginnings had been hoped for remained a tenuous outpost until 1774.

Livestock presented little problem as they multiplied rapidly on the extensive pasturage available. Cattle were apportioned to missions founded and planned. Each received nine cows, one bull, two heifers and six small calves.⁵¹⁹ Small animals were added gradually; a few arriving on each supply vessel. These included sows, boars, piglets, chickens and even turkeys.⁵²⁰ There was disagreement over whether military or missionary should have custody of livestock assigned to future missions. The argument was significant in light of chronic food shortages since cow's milk was an important source of food. In 1773 Viceroy Bucareli stipulated that stock assigned to missions San Francisco and Santa Clara should be delivered to Serra "since it will be better cared for at the missions than at the presidio, and the friars will have somewhat more milk with which to support the Christians."⁵²¹ The first report made on the state of the missions in December of 1773 testifies to the rapid increase in livestock. Cattle at the five existing missions totaled 205 head.⁵²² This represents a 227 percent increase over the eighteen head originally assigned to each. Sheep herds totaled ninety-four and the missions possessed sixty-seven goats. Sixteen hogs received in 1771 had increased to 102. Mission San Diego had four donkeys and divided between five missions were sixty horses of all kinds. The missions held seventy-seven mules which were crucial for transportation of supplies. Ever present chickens were never mentioned in reports, but must have multiplied rapidly.

Cattle, except for milk, were not a significant food source in these early days. It was essential that they be allowed to increase and oxen were crucial as work animals. Not until the 1780's did meat form a permanent part of the staple diet, although mutton at least was served to members of the Anza Expedition of 1775-1776. The diarist and chaplain of the expedition noted that they were served a gourmet meal of mutton at Mission San Gabriel but appetites were dampened and Anza became nauseated from the filthy kitchen, cooks and eating utensils.⁵²³

⁵¹⁹ Report on Missions by Junípero Serra and Mathias Antonio Noriega, Monterey, July 1, 1784, SBMA.

⁵²⁰ For example, see *Memoria de lo que he recibido Juntamente con los demas padres, destinados ministros de estas nuevas misiones*, signed by Serra, San Carlos, June 20, 1771, AGN. Californias, Vol. 66. Transcript SBMA and Francisco Hijosa to Viceroy Bucareli, San Blas, December 15, 1773, AGN. Historia, Vol. 61. Transcript SBMA.

⁵²¹ Decision of His Excellency and the Royal Council, Mexico, May 6, 1773. Trans. in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 35-55.

⁵²² State of the First Five Missions by Francisco Palóu, San Carlos, December 10, 1773. Trans. in *ibid.*, III, 211-240.

⁵²³ Herbert E. Bolton, ed., *Font's Complete Diary*, Vol. IV of *Anza's California Expeditions*. 5 vols., Berkeley, 1930, p. 241. Also see Viceroy de Croix to Pedro Fages, Mexico, November 12, 1779, AGN. Californias, Vol. 66. The Viceroy warns Fages to see that no cattle are slaughtered.

Agriculture to 1774 is a story of repeated failure for several reasons. Missions such as San Diego and San Carlos had been located on lands ill suited to cultivation; labor was scarce and most of the missionaries lacked knowledge and skill necessary for success. Mission San Carlos had originally been founded in the proximity of the royal presidio in June of 1770. In Serra's estimation, it was a poor choice since it led to conflict with the military and there was no water for irrigation. A garden was attempted in 1771 and all kinds of seeds were planted. Everything grew, but nothing reached maturity. To Serra's chagrin it was discovered later that the soil was "... at times washed over by the salt water of the bay, and so is fit for nothing but nettles and reeds." At the end of 1771 the mission was moved to a new site on the banks of the Carmelo River where it was hoped that crops would do better. A garden was planted in 1772 but did poorly since no one was available to care for it. Three almuds of wheat were sown in the fall of 1772, but yielded only five fanegas. A half *cuartillo* of barley sown yielded three almuds and two almuds of maize produced 4½ fanegas. Beans and peas were also sown but yielded nothing. The ground had been poorly prepared and there had been no way to plow it. Serra had been promised that the river could easily be tapped for irrigation but it had proved impossible.⁵²⁴ The river ran too low and during the rainy season the current was so strong that it would have washed out any attempted dam. Seasonal crops were feasible with dry farming since the climate was humid and the ground remained damp long after the rainy season.⁵²⁵ Not until 1774 did the mission have a significant harvest. They sowed the previous year's harvest and reaped 125 fanegas of wheat, 20 of barley, 5 fanegas of beans, 150 fanegas of corn and 1 fanega of lima beans.⁵²⁶

Mission San Antonio had a similar experience. It was founded on July 14, 1771 on the San Antonio River. The following year after having plowed and planted it was necessary to move the mission because the river dried up. The mission was subsequently moved to an arroyo named San Miguel which had a constant flow. Here an irrigation ditch was excavated, land was plowed and two fanegas of seed wheat were planted in addition to several almuds of corn. Thirty fanegas of wheat were harvested and seventy of corn.⁵²⁷

The selection of the site for Mission San Luis Obispo, which was

⁵²⁴ Report on Missions by Serra and Noriega, Monterey, July 1, 1784, SBMA.

⁵²⁵ State of the First Five Missions by Francisco Palóu, San Carlos, December 10, 1773. Trans. in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 211-240. Also see Herbert I. Priestley, ed., *A Historical, Political and Natural Description of California by Pedro Fages*. Berkeley, 1937, 65.

⁵²⁶ Serra to Viceroy Bucareli, Monterey, February 5, 1775, AGN. Provincias Internas, Vol. 66. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 222-247.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*, and State of the First Five Missions by Francisco Palóu, San Carlos, December 10, 1773. Trans. in Bolton, *Palóu's New California*, III, 211-240.

founded on September 1, 1772, reflected experience gained in selection of locations for older missions. The mission was located on a hill around which a stream well suited for crop irrigation flowed. Nearby an arroyo flowed with adequate water to support another field. Although not located in the immediate vicinity of an Indian village as had been customary, its site had been chosen with an eye to good land, water, timber and pasture. Governor Fages was ecstatic over the mission's potential when he visited it in November of 1773.

Abundant water is found in every direction, and pasture for the cattle, so that no matter how large the mission grows to be and however great the number of Indians reduced, the land promises sustenance, without prejudice either to the mission or the Indians, and for many settlers as well, who may desire to establish themselves here.⁵²⁸

His assessment proved correct the following year. In 1774 the mission planted four fanegas of wheat and got back two hundred fanegas; from three almuds of corn, eighty fanegas were harvested; half an almud of beans yielded three fanegas and two almuds of chickpeas gave three fanegas.⁵²⁹

Mission San Gabriel, another mission whose site had been selected wisely, was founded September 8, 1771. There was plenty of land and water which could easily be diverted. Because of conflicts with soldiers and lack of labor, little was done in the first year. The first planting of any substance was made in 1773 and from eight almuds of corn they harvested 130 fanegas. Four almuds of beans yielded seven fanegas. The following year revealed the potential of the mission. Six fanegas of wheat yielded 90, 13 almuds of corn garnered 240 fanegas and a fanega of beans yielded 30, proving this to be one of the most productive missions.⁵³⁰

San Diego, the first of the missions, was founded on July 16, 1769. Its chronological advantage did nothing to make up for its natural deficiencies and it remained for all time among the poorest of the missions. There was abundant pasture, but no water for irrigation. The first year's crops were washed away by the river which overflowed its banks during the rainy season. The following year seeds were sown farther from the river and the rains failed before seeds had germinated.⁵³¹ In August of 1774, the mission was moved to a new site because of poor land, lack of water, and proximity to the presidio. It was hoped that more arable land and water would be available at the new site which was approximately two leagues up the valley from the old one. Seven fanegas of wheat, which yielded only thirty,

⁵²⁸ Priestley, *A Historical, Political and Natural Description*, 43.

⁵²⁹ Serra to Viceroy Bucareli, Monterey, February 5, 1775, AGN. Provincias Internas, Vol. 66. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 222-247.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵³¹ Priestley, *A Historical, Political and Natural Description*, 10.

were sown at the old mission in 1774. The new site proved to be little better than the old one due mainly to lack of water.⁵³²

The year 1775 improved upon the trend toward adequate harvests established in 1774 proving that the basic problem of survival had been overcome. In that year the five missions harvested a total of 974 fanegas of maize and 1,029 fanegas of wheat. Only Mission San Diego had no maize harvest and was forced to purchase 80 fanegas from the presidio.⁵³³ Similar quantities of barley, beans and peas were also harvested. Several factors were responsible for the growing agricultural success of the missions, one of course being the additional laborers which Serra was granted by Viceroy Bucareli in 1773; however this is not a sufficient explanation. Locations of missions were readjusted in light of experience, adaptations were made to season and climate and rudimentary irrigation systems were begun. A mistake had been made in early years by concentrating heavily upon cultivation of wheat. Since the climatic conditions and latitude of Alta California approximated those of Spain, it seemed only reasonable to attempt cultivation of the same crops. Only slowly did the padres accept evidence that humidity and spring rains often caused wheat to rot in the stalks. Wheat did not yield as large a harvest per quantity of seed sown nor did it produce as much per acre as maize. Wheat sowing at each mission rose little between 1771 and 1775 but quantities of corn planted rose significantly. In 1775 wheat yielded an approximate average of 37 to 1, while maize gave an average of 182 to 1. Maize production was only an expedient adopted to overcome hardship for when food was plentiful in later years the Spanish preference for wheat was allowed to determine which crops were sown.

Gardens, regarded as a diet supplement source, never received full descriptions as did harvests of staple crops. Fray Pedro Font of the Anza Expedition noted vegetables which were doing well. San Gabriel produced celery, lettuce and a parsnip-like plant. At San Carlos, gardens tended diligently by Father Palóu were surrounded by flower beds and cauliflower; various vegetables and herbs were growing in profusion. All were raised without irrigation since manpower was lacking to dig a channel from the river. Plants were watered at transplantation with water laboriously carried in gourds.⁵³⁴ From scattered references it is certain that the following began to be produced about this time: cauliflower, melons, peas,

⁵³² Serra to Viceroy Bucareli, Monterey, February 5, 1775, AGN. Provincias Internas, Vol. 66. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 222-247.

⁵³³ Informe del estado de las Misiones de Monterey hasta principios del año de 1776, Father Guardian Francisco Pangua, Mexico, January 1, 1776, AGN. Californias, Vol. 72. Transcript SBMA.

⁵³⁴ Bolton, *Font's Diary*, 177-178, 301-303.

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⁵²⁹ Serra to Viceroy Bucareli, Monterey, February 5, 1775, AGN. Provincias Internas, Vol.

66. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, II, 222-247.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵³¹ Priestley, *A Historical, Political and Natural Description*, 10.

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⁵³³ Informe del estado de las Misiones de Monterey hasta principios del año de 1776, Father Guardian Francisco Pangua, Mexico, January 1, 1776, AGN. Californias, Vol. 72. Transcript SBMA.

⁵³⁴ Bolton, *Font's Diary*, 177-178, 301-303.

pimientos, lettuce, beets, carrots, cabbage, cucumbers, squash, watermelon, chili, pumpkins, gourds for drinking cups and assorted herbs.

Missions founded after 1775 went through the usual developmental stages, but progressed through them much more rapidly. Because of the caution and care with which sites were selected, experimentation was kept to a minimum. Exact planting times and best suited crops still had to be determined but with the aid of past experience in other locations. Lean years were generally reduced to one or two and because of aid rendered by established missions, starvation was never a real threat.

Three missions, Santa Clara, San Francisco and San Juan Capistrano were established in 1776-1777. These three missions prospered from the start. Each was well provided with livestock plus natural increase which had been held in trust and with foodstuffs provided by missions. San Luis Obispo provided eleven fanegas of maize and one of chickpeas for San Juan Capistrano and twelve fanegas of maize for Santa Clara. Livestock held for Santa Clara at San Luis totaled 107 head. Only six months after the first of the three had been founded and little better than a month after the founding of Santa Clara, Serra assured the Father Guardian that there was no reason to fear that any would have to face severe hardship.⁵³⁵ San Francisco and Santa Clara had what was necessary and San Juan Capistrano had enough to live on. Based on information from the College of San Fernando, Melchor Peramas, Bucareli's secretary, noted in July of 1777 that the three new missions were firmly established and prosperous and that gentiles were being attracted to them.⁵³⁶

In the first year of its founding Mission Santa Clara reaped a harvest of maize and beans, albeit a small one. Four and a half almuds of maize were sown and forty fanegas harvested. A half fanega of beans yielded five fanegas.⁵³⁷ The yield of maize was over 100 to 1, indicating decent soil and climatic conditions. Essential buildings had been constructed and the livestock herd was increasing. In 1778, two years after its founding, the harvest at San Juan Capistrano was among the best, with 200 fanegas of wheat and 750 of maize being reaped.⁵³⁸ The experience of these two missions contrasted sharply with that of the first two, San Diego and San Carlos. The prosperity of the new missions continued. Governor Neve was able to write the *Comandante General* in 1781 telling him that the three new missions were prosperous enough to maintain neophytes without

⁵³⁵ Serra to Father Francisco Panguá, Monterey, February 26, 1777, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, III, 86-107.

⁵³⁶ Noticias de Californias, Mexico, July 27, 1777, AGI. Guadalajara 515. Phs. SBMA.

⁵³⁷ Informe de Santa Clara, Fray José Antonio Murguía and Fray Tomás de la Peña, Santa Clara, December 30, 1777, SBMA.

⁵³⁸ Informe de San Juan Capistrano, Fray Pablo de Mugártgui, San Juan Capistrano, April 18, 1779, AGN. Colección de Documentos para la Historia de Mexico. Segunda serie, Vol. 2.

want since harvests had been bountiful for two years. Fields had been expanded and water was plentiful. Livestock was thriving under the diligent Fathers and prospects for the future were bright.⁵³⁹

Although Palóu says that Gálvez equipped the expedition of 1769 with "seeds for vegetable, flowers and flax," there is no evidence that attempts were made at this early date to provide fruit trees or grape vines.⁵⁴⁰ In 1777 Serra wrote to Bucareli saying that he and Governor Neve had discussed means of making California more prosperous and the two had concluded that, "some improvements could easily be introduced from California, such as obtaining additional livestock, grafts from fruit trees, for instance fig and pomegranate trees and grapevines."⁵⁴¹ Neve must have made arrangements quickly, as Serra was certain he would, since as early as 1779 grape culture was reported at the missions. In the spring of that year Father Mugártegui at San Juan Capistrano reported that vine cuttings from Baja California had been started. By 1784 vines were growing at San Diego and San Juan Capistrano was producing table wine. By 1798 Lasuén noted that San Diego, San Juan Capistrano, San Gabriel, San Buenaventura and Santa Barbara had grapes to eat and were making wine.⁵⁴² After the turn of the century grape culture expanded to include all missions from San Diego to Santa Barbara. To the north it was risky, since grapes frequently failed to ripen on account of the fog and shorter growing season. At San Luis Obispo, San Miguel, San Antonio, Santa Clara and San José grapes were grown and wine produced if the weather was not too intemperate.⁵⁴³

The first fruits produced were peaches because of their rapid maturation. They were being grown at Mission San Gabriel in 1779 and probably also at a number of other missions.⁵⁴⁴ During his visit of 1786 the French naturalist, La Pérouse, confirmed that as of that date fruit trees were scarce, although he pronounced the climate suitable. As his contribution to the much romanticized orchards, La Pérouse gave a variety of fruit tree cuttings including pears, peaches and plums. Malaspina, visiting California in 1791, observed that seeds left by La Pérouse were bearing fruit and he noted walnut and hazelnut in addition to apple and pear.⁵⁴⁵

⁵³⁹ Felipe de Neve to Teodoro de Croix, Monterey, January 20, 1781, AGN. Californias. Vol.

71.

⁵⁴⁰ Geiger, *Palóu's Life of Serra*, 55.

⁵⁴¹ Serra to Viceroy Bucareli, Monterey, June 1, 1777, BNM. Cartas de Junípero Serra. Trans. in Tibesar, *Writings of Serra*, III, 138-146.

⁵⁴² Biennial report for the years 1797 and 1798, Lasuén, San Carlos, February 20, 1799, SBMA.

⁵⁴³ Biennial Report for 1809 and 1810, Father Estevan Tapis, San Luis Rey, May 25, 1811, SBMA.

⁵⁴⁴ Status of San Diego Mission at the end of December, 1779, Lasuén, AGN. DHM., ser. II, tomo II. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, I, 341-347.

⁵⁴⁵ La Pérouse, *A Voyage Round the World*, I, 441-442.

In 1792, the Englishman, George Vancouver, paid his first visit to California. He and his companion, Archibald Menzies, were more observant of fruit and vegetable culture than any foreigners who preceeded them. Menzies was amazed at the garden at San Buenaventura, as was Vancouver.

The garden of Buena Ventura far exceeded anything I had before met with in these regions, both in respect of the quantity, quality, and variety of its excellent productions, not only indigenous to the country, but appertaining to the temperate as well as the torrid zone; not one species having yet been sown or planted that had not flourished. These having principally consisted of apples, pears, plums, figs, oranges, peaches, and pomegranates together with plantains, banana, coconut, sugar cane, indigo, and a great variety of the necessary and useful kitchen herbs, plants and roots.⁵⁴⁶

Prickly pear was cultivated both for its fruit and cochineal. San Francisco was disappointing; the garden was poor although some figs, peaches and apples were thriving. Santa Clara had an excellent garden and orchard.⁵⁴⁷

Although elaboration and expansion of orchards took place after 1800, most species had been introduced and were producing before that date. Vegetable gardens were also expanded to include potatoes introduced by La Pérouse, sweet potatoes and rice.⁵⁴⁸ In 1816 chestnuts were produced for the first time and in 1820 Mission Santa Barbara was growing sweet oranges.⁵⁴⁹ In 1806 the Russian, Langsdorf, claimed that Santa Clara had only a few stunted fruit trees which scarcely bore any fruit, most certainly because of climate.⁵⁵⁰ At Mission San José he pronounced the garden well laid out and in good order. The fruit trees which he saw were still very young but all things considered their produce was quite good. Some vines had been recently planted and gave an excellent sweet wine.⁵⁵¹ Orchards and gardens provided dietary supplements and dried or preserved, their produce was available throughout the year, but they were never in a position to replace staple crops.

The dynamic expansion in mission agriculture occurred after the death of Junípero Serra in 1784. The end of frontier California was marked by the succession to the Presidency of the missions of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén in 1785. During this period (1785-1802) the foundations were laid upon which the following "Golden Years" were to rest. By the time of his death in 1802 annual harvests of staple crops had increased sevenfold, thereby assuring the survival of Spanish California.

⁵⁴⁶ Wilbur, *Vancouver in California, 1792-1794*, 141.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁸ Father José Seán to José de la Guerra, San Buenaventura, December 30, 1816, DGC, SBMA, and José Seán to De la Guerra, San Buenaventura, August 8, 1816, DGC, SBMA.

⁵⁴⁹ Father Vicente Sarriá to Father Mariano Payeras, San Carlos, November 8, 1816, SBMA and Father Antonio Ripoll to Governor Solá, Santa Barbara, January 19, 1820, SBMA.

⁵⁵⁰ Langsdorf, *Voyages*, 161-162.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 193.

TABLE 16
PERCENTAGE OF WHEAT IN MISSION HARVESTS OF
STAPLE CROPS 1785-1821*

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Total Harvest in Fanegas</i> | <i>Wheat Harvest in Fanegas</i> | <i>Percentage of Wheat</i> |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1785 | 9,052 | 4,669 | 51% |
| 1790 | 18,460 | 9,158 | 49% |
| 1795 | 18,056 | 10,368 | 57% |
| 1800 | 41,309 | 28,689 | 69% |
| 1805 | 59,734 | 42,857 | 71% |
| 1810 | 61,864 | 42,770 | 69% |
| 1815 | 61,558 | 43,834 | 71% |
| 1820 | 62,365 | 40,628 | 65% |
| 1821 | 115,965 | 79,740 | 68% |

* Figures were derived from Annual Reports on the State of the Missions for the years cited, SBMA.

Part of this prodigious increase can be explained by the productive capacity of nine new missions founded which doubled the number of such institutions geared to staple crop production.⁵⁵²

Varying mixtures of wheat, corn and barley made up the staple crops of the Alta California missions. Time, place, diseases, weather and personal preferences influenced the size of harvests and the percentage of each grain in the total crop. Conclusions concerning the relative importance of each factor can be no more than tentative since much detailed knowledge is lacking. Exact information on then existing weather, rainfall and soil fertility would improve such an analysis but obviously are not available.

Wheat, the most important staple, was the preferred grain and as missions matured its significance increased. Wheat proved to be readily adaptable to the semi-arid California climate and with the use of both winter and spring varieties, would yield two crops annually. Winter wheat was planted in November or December depending on climate. Most statistical reports do not differentiate between the two varieties.⁵⁵³ Consequently it is impossible to determine what ratio of winter and spring wheat composed the total harvest. Some analysis has been done of the plant content of adobe bricks, revealing at least two types of wheat grown by the missions.⁵⁵⁴ Propo wheat (*Triticum vulgare graecum*) and Little

⁵⁵² During Lasuén's presidency the following missions were founded: San José, San Juan Bautista, San Miguel, San Fernando, San Luis Rey—1797; Soledad and Santa Cruz—1791; Santa Barbara—1786.

⁵⁵³ Informe del estado de las Misiones de Monterey, Fray Francisco Pangua, Mexico, December 9, 1776, AGN. Californias. Vol. 72. Transcript SBMA.

⁵⁵⁴ George W. Hendry and Margaret P. Kelly, "Plant Content of Adobe Brick with a Note on Adobe Brick Making," *CHSQ*, Vol. 4, 1925, 362-370. See also, George W. Hendry, "The Adobe Brick as an Historical Source," *JAH*, Vol. 6, 1931, 111-113.

Club Wheat (*Triticum Compactum humboldtii*) were found in adobe samples and their cultivation has persisted. A side benefit of wheat cultivation was the stubble left in the fields after harvests which could be used for grazing purposes. The overwhelming factor favoring wheat as the primary staple crop was the European bias in favor of wheat brought across the Atlantic from Spain with the Franciscans who were to supervise mission agriculture. An analysis of mission harvests confirms this preference and a concentration on wheat cultivation is evident.

A gradual, although irregular, increase in wheat as a component of total harvests is perceptible in the above chart. Declines in the percentage were generally due to a lack of rainfall, insects, birds and diseases which destroyed portions of the crop and were beyond control of the Fathers. Table 17 illustrates that attempts to increase wheat harvests were conscious policy.⁵⁵⁵ Every year in which the wheat harvest declined was followed by increased sowing of wheat. In the case of maize and barley the reverse was true and obvious attempts were made to curtail production.

Wheat yields illustrated in Table 17 indicate its reliability as a staple. Wheat did not fluctuate as widely in productivity as either corn or barley implying that harvests were dependable. The lowest yield of wheat occurred in 1795 when it gave eight fanegas for each fanega planted. This is attributable to drought which effected the missions in 1794 and 1795. Father President Lasuén noted that 1794 was a year of grain scarcity and he explained that the 1794 harvest had fallen off by 5300 fanegas as compared to the preceeding year.⁵⁵⁶ 1795, he wrote to Father Guardian Antonio Nogueyra, was a year of extreme dryness; 1807 through 1809 were also years of serious drought. In both 1807 and 1809 yield of wheat was only 10:1 while in 1808 it was a mediocre 13:1. Father Mariano Payeras noted in 1807 that because of drought Mission La Purísima had been forced to buy 400 fanegas of grain most of which was supplied by Mission Santa Barbara.⁵⁵⁷ Bitter experience had prompted plans for an irrigation system which was begun in 1807;⁵⁵⁸ 1809 was another year of extreme hardship and in April Father José Seán wrote from San Buenaventura that:

We had no rain here since November 25th, not even a drop. This means, of course, that it has not rained at all thus far this year. You can well imagine the inevitable hardship caused by the resulting lack of fodder, and the severe damage to our crops. This is especially true where there are inadequate facilities for irrigation, a prime necessity in situations of this kind.⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁵ Amounts in Table 17 were derived from Status of the Missions for the years cited, SBMA. All quantities are in fanegas. Figures for amounts harvested and yield are for one fanega sown.

⁵⁵⁶ Lasuén to Father Guardian, San Carlos, July 30, 1795, AGN. DHM. ser. 1. vol. 1. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, I, 343-344. Also see Lasuén to Don Diego de Borica, San Carlos, Aug. 16, 1795, BL., CC-12. Trans. In Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, I, 344-346.

TABLE 17

SOWINGS, HARVESTS AND YIELDS OF WHEAT, BARLEY AND CORN
1785-1821

| Year | Wheat | | | Barley | | | Corn | | |
|------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|-----------|-------|------|-----------|-------|
| | Sown | Harvested | Yield | Sown | Harvested | Yield | Sown | Harvested | Yield |
| 1785 | 301 | 4,669 | 15:1 | 63 | 883 | 13:1 | 37 | 3,500 | 93:1 |
| 1786 | 368 | 5,837 | 15:1 | 70 | 1,923 | 27:1 | 71 | 4,355 | 61:1 |
| 1787 | 430 | 8,018 | 18:1 | 76 | 2,577 | 33:1 | 65 | 3,845 | 59:1 |
| 1788 | 504 | 7,600 | 15:1 | 96 | 2,350 | 24:1 | 68 | 4,935 | 72:1 |
| 1790 | 712 | 9,158 | 12:1 | 143 | 2,876 | 20:1 | 70 | 6,426 | 91:1 |
| 1791 | 897 | 15,377 | 17:1 | 120 | 2,943 | 24:1 | 78 | 7,625 | 97:1 |
| 1792 | 877 | 15,271 | 17:1 | 191 | 3,282 | 17:1 | 106 | 11,853 | 111:1 |
| 1793 | 975 | 18,540 | 19:1 | 170 | 3,778 | 22:1 | 76 | 6,436 | 84:1 |
| 1794 | 1,130 | 15,006 | 13:1 | 147 | 1,622 | 11:1 | 83 | 6,822 | 82:1 |
| 1795 | 1,195 | 10,368 | 8:1 | 195 | 894 | 4:1 | 80 | 6,794 | 84:1 |
| 1796 | 1,407 | 23,270 | 16:1 | 213 | 2,635 | 11:1 | 85 | 4,638 | 54:1 |
| 1797 | 1,487 | 30,038 | 20:1 | 185 | 2,889 | 15:1 | 84 | 3,313 | 39:1 |
| 1798 | 1,703 | 22,060 | 12:1 | 108 | 2,244 | 20:1 | 73 | 5,116 | 70:1 |
| 1799 | 2,006 | 31,697 | 15:1 | 205 | 5,581 | 27:1 | 74 | 6,423 | 86:1 |
| 1800 | 1,905 | 28,689 | 15:1 | 242 | 2,795 | 11:1 | 105 | 9,825 | 93:1 |
| 1801 | 2,190 | 32,024 | 14:1 | 398 | 4,612 | 11:1 | 112 | 9,289 | 82:1 |
| 1802 | 2,089 | 33,576 | 16:1 | 321 | 4,408 | 13:1 | 66 | 4,661 | 70:1 |
| 1803 | 2,173 | 30,135 | 13:1 | 381 | 6,859 | 17:1 | 73 | 7,932 | 108:1 |
| 1804 | 2,509 | 44,571 | 17:1 | 440 | 10,177 | 23:1 | 85 | 9,299 | 109:1 |
| 1805 | 2,539 | 42,857 | 16:1 | 489 | 7,869 | 16:1 | 93 | 9,008 | 96:1 |
| 1806 | 2,871 | 51,601 | 17:1 | 588 | 10,010 | 17:1 | 112 | 10,758 | 96:1 |
| 1807 | 2,941 | 30,255 | 10:1 | 476 | 6,338 | 13:1 | 106 | 7,534 | 71:1 |
| 1808 | 2,626 | 35,058 | 13:1 | 595 | 10,674 | 17:1 | 75 | 7,352 | 98:1 |
| 1809 | 2,528 | 25,307 | 10:1 | 514 | 4,703 | 9:1 | 88 | 7,234 | 82:1 |
| 1810 | 2,726 | 42,770 | 15:1 | 718 | 10,091 | 14:1 | 74 | 9,003 | 121:1 |
| 1811 | 2,642 | 48,496 | 18:1 | 796 | 14,468 | 18:1 | 91 | 16,121 | 177:1 |
| 1812 | 2,744 | 44,503 | 16:1 | 687 | 10,170 | 14:1 | 92 | 14,274 | 155:1 |
| 1813 | 2,740 | 45,680 | 16:1 | 644 | 8,869 | 13:1 | 72 | 13,338 | 185:1 |
| 1814 | 2,652 | 33,512 | 12:1 | 638 | 10,644 | 16:1 | 85 | 13,723 | 161:1 |
| 1815 | 2,857 | 43,834 | 15:1 | 654 | 7,622 | 11:1 | 85 | 10,082 | 118:1 |
| 1816 | 2,875 | 42,089 | 14:1 | 787 | 10,533 | 13:1 | 105 | 15,193 | 144:1 |
| 1817 | 2,997 | 52,201 | 18:1 | 907 | 13,843 | 20:1 | 115 | 22,354 | 181:1 |
| 1818 | 3,023 | 54,795 | 17:1 | 802 | 16,054 | 15:1 | 74 | 13,398 | 194:1 |
| 1819 | 2,933 | 44,413 | 15:1 | 860 | 11,153 | 13:1 | 91 | 13,440 | 147:1 |
| 1820 | 3,002 | 40,628 | 13:1 | 671 | 4,268 | 6:1 | 106 | 17,469 | 164:1 |
| 1821 | 3,665 | 79,740 | 21:1 | 806 | 14,141 | 17:1 | 115 | 22,084 | 192:1 |

⁵⁵⁷ Father Mariano Payeras to Fray José Viñals, Santa Barbara, October 13, 1807, AGN, Historia de Mexico, Primera serie, tomo 2.

⁵⁵⁸ Father Mariano Payeras to Fray José Viñals, La Purisima, January 28, 1807, AGN, Historia de Mexico, Primera serie, Tomo 2.

⁵⁵⁹ Father José Señán to Fray José Viñals, San Buenaventura, April 4, 1809, DML. Trans. in Nathan and Simpson, *Letters of Señán*, 39-40.

TABLE 17

SOWINGS, HARVESTS AND YIELDS OF WHEAT, BARLEY AND CORN
1785-1821

| Year | Wheat | | | Barley | | | Corn | | |
|------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|-----------|-------|------|-----------|-------|
| | Sown | Harvested | Yield | Sown | Harvested | Yield | Sown | Harvested | Yield |
| 1785 | 301 | 4,669 | 15:1 | 63 | 883 | 13:1 | 37 | 3,500 | 93:1 |
| 1786 | 368 | 5,837 | 15:1 | 70 | 1,923 | 27:1 | 71 | 4,355 | 61:1 |
| 1787 | 430 | 8,018 | 18:1 | 76 | 2,577 | 33:1 | 65 | 3,845 | 59:1 |
| 1788 | 504 | 7,600 | 15:1 | 96 | 2,350 | 24:1 | 68 | 4,935 | 72:1 |
| 1790 | 712 | 9,158 | 12:1 | 143 | 2,876 | 20:1 | 70 | 6,426 | 91:1 |
| 1791 | 897 | 15,377 | 17:1 | 120 | 2,943 | 24:1 | 78 | 7,625 | 97:1 |
| 1792 | 877 | 15,271 | 17:1 | 191 | 3,282 | 17:1 | 106 | 11,853 | 111:1 |
| 1793 | 975 | 18,540 | 19:1 | 170 | 3,778 | 22:1 | 76 | 6,436 | 84:1 |
| 1794 | 1,130 | 15,006 | 13:1 | 147 | 1,622 | 11:1 | 83 | 6,822 | 82:1 |
| 1795 | 1,195 | 10,368 | 8:1 | 195 | 894 | 4:1 | 80 | 6,794 | 84:1 |
| 1796 | 1,407 | 23,270 | 16:1 | 213 | 2,635 | 11:1 | 85 | 4,638 | 54:1 |
| 1797 | 1,487 | 30,038 | 20:1 | 185 | 2,889 | 15:1 | 84 | 3,313 | 39:1 |
| 1798 | 1,703 | 22,060 | 12:1 | 108 | 2,244 | 20:1 | 73 | 5,116 | 70:1 |
| 1799 | 2,006 | 31,697 | 15:1 | 205 | 5,581 | 27:1 | 74 | 6,423 | 86:1 |
| 1800 | 1,905 | 28,689 | 15:1 | 242 | 2,795 | 11:1 | 105 | 9,825 | 93:1 |
| 1801 | 2,190 | 32,024 | 14:1 | 398 | 4,612 | 11:1 | 112 | 9,289 | 82:1 |
| 1802 | 2,089 | 33,576 | 16:1 | 321 | 4,408 | 13:1 | 66 | 4,661 | 70:1 |
| 1803 | 2,173 | 30,135 | 13:1 | 381 | 6,859 | 17:1 | 73 | 7,932 | 108:1 |
| 1804 | 2,509 | 44,571 | 17:1 | 440 | 10,177 | 23:1 | 85 | 9,299 | 109:1 |
| 1805 | 2,539 | 42,857 | 16:1 | 489 | 7,869 | 16:1 | 93 | 9,008 | 96:1 |
| 1806 | 2,871 | 51,601 | 17:1 | 588 | 10,010 | 17:1 | 112 | 10,758 | 96:1 |
| 1807 | 2,941 | 30,255 | 10:1 | 476 | 6,338 | 13:1 | 106 | 7,534 | 71:1 |
| 1808 | 2,626 | 35,058 | 13:1 | 595 | 10,674 | 17:1 | 75 | 7,352 | 98:1 |
| 1809 | 2,528 | 25,307 | 10:1 | 514 | 4,703 | 9:1 | 88 | 7,234 | 82:1 |
| 1810 | 2,726 | 42,770 | 15:1 | 718 | 10,091 | 14:1 | 74 | 9,003 | 121:1 |
| 1811 | 2,642 | 48,496 | 18:1 | 796 | 14,468 | 18:1 | 91 | 16,121 | 177:1 |
| 1812 | 2,744 | 44,503 | 16:1 | 687 | 10,170 | 14:1 | 92 | 14,274 | 155:1 |
| 1813 | 2,740 | 45,680 | 16:1 | 644 | 8,869 | 13:1 | 72 | 13,338 | 185:1 |
| 1814 | 2,652 | 33,512 | 12:1 | 638 | 10,644 | 16:1 | 85 | 13,723 | 161:1 |
| 1815 | 2,857 | 43,834 | 15:1 | 654 | 7,622 | 11:1 | 85 | 10,082 | 118:1 |
| 1816 | 2,875 | 42,089 | 14:1 | 787 | 10,533 | 13:1 | 105 | 15,193 | 144:1 |
| 1817 | 2,997 | 52,201 | 18:1 | 907 | 13,843 | 20:1 | 115 | 22,354 | 181:1 |
| 1818 | 3,023 | 54,795 | 17:1 | 802 | 16,054 | 15:1 | 74 | 13,398 | 194:1 |
| 1819 | 2,933 | 44,413 | 15:1 | 860 | 11,153 | 13:1 | 91 | 13,440 | 147:1 |
| 1820 | 3,002 | 40,628 | 13:1 | 671 | 4,268 | 6:1 | 106 | 17,469 | 164:1 |
| 1821 | 3,665 | 79,740 | 21:1 | 806 | 14,141 | 17:1 | 115 | 22,084 | 192:1 |

⁵⁵⁷ Father Mariano Payeras to Fray José Viñals, Santa Barbara, October 13, 1807, AGN, Historia de Mexico, Primera serie, tomo 2.

⁵⁵⁸ Father Mariano Payeras to Fray José Viñals, La Purisima, January 28, 1807, AGN, Historia de Mexico, Primera serie, Tomo 2.

⁵⁵⁹ Father José Seán to Fray José Viñals, San Buenaventura, April 4, 1809, DML. Trans. in Nathan and Simpson, *Letters of Seán*, 39-40.

Maturity, labor, resources and drought combined to provide experience, ability and the stimulus for the missions to construct extensive irrigation systems. The success of irrigation works was revealed between 1810 and 1820 when a relatively high yield of wheat was sustained.

Wheat was not, however, the ideal crop. Its average yield was only 15:1 while maize had an average of 109:1. The maximums illustrate the point even more graphically. In 1821 wheat gave an average of 21 fanegas for each sown while corn yielded 192:1. This implied that only 1 percent of the corn harvest had to be saved as seed for the next year's crop, while close to 7 percent of all wheat harvested could not be consumed. The low yield of wheat also made it essential that more labor be available for sowing. Almost seven fanegas of wheat had to be sown to reap a harvest equal in size to that produced by one fanega of corn.

Wheat was not a universally successful crop at all of the missions. Particularly at the northern coastal missions yields were poor because fog and excessive humidity often caused the grain to rot in the stalk. Wheat harvests at Mission San Carlos, for example, were erratic and usually below the average for all the missions. At southern missions and at those located away from the coast wheat was at its best. In the dry climate wheat had an advantage over maize since it could withstand drought for longer periods and it did not have a critical stage, as maize did, during which adequate moisture was essential for proper maturation.

Maize was the second most important staple, exceeded in value to the mission economy only by wheat. Its culture demanded more exacting conditions but when its requirements were met returns far surpassed anything possible from wheat. The California growing season was sufficient in most areas but crops failed or yielded poorly at missions such as San Diego and San Luis Rey because the air was not humid enough to allow pollination. August, the month during which corn reached maturity was crucial, since lack of moisture at this period would stunt growth and prevent the crop from fully ripening.⁵⁶⁰ Soil depletion accompanied corn cultivation since the plant fed heavily upon the nutrients in the soil and rapidly consumed them. Sustained harvests of the crop required fertilizers and crop rotation, the principles of which were poorly understood in Hispanic California. Despite limitations, maize had the advantage of giving extremely high yields. This gave missions which met its conditions a dependable and high yielding crop which was of particular value in the lean years of any new mission. Seaside missions such as San Buenaventura, Santa Barbara and San Gabriel, with high humidity, long growing seasons and extensive systems of irrigation were exceptional producers of

⁵⁶⁰ Harold K. Wilson, *Grain Crops*, New York, 1948, 285-286.

maize. Other missions were able to improve harvests as systems of irrigation were constructed. The effect of irrigation on corn culture can be discerned in Table 17. The prodigious increase in corn yields after 1810 was in large part due to the construction of irrigation works in the previous decade as a reaction to devastating drought.

Because of high yields maize was well adapted to the needs of new missions. Providing adequate water was available either by rainfall or irrigation, maize could be relied upon for large harvests with minimal labor. La Purísima, established at the end of 1787, planted no wheat in 1788 but one fanega of corn sown yielded 144 fanegas, while Mission Santa Cruz founded at the end of 1791 harvested 250 fanegas of corn and only 120 of wheat in its second year.

TABLE 18

PERCENTAGE OF MAIZE IN MISSION HARVESTS OF
STAPLE CROPS 1785-1821*

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Total Harvest in Fanegas</i> | <i>Maize Harvest in Fanegas</i> | <i>Percentage of Maize</i> |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1785 | 9,052 | 3,500 | 38% |
| 1790 | 18,460 | 6,426 | 34% |
| 1795 | 18,056 | 6,794 | 37% |
| 1800 | 41,309 | 9,825 | 23% |
| 1805 | 59,734 | 9,008 | 15% |
| 1810 | 61,864 | 9,003 | 14% |
| 1815 | 61,558 | 10,820 | 16% |
| 1820 | 62,365 | 17,469 | 28% |
| 1821 | 115,965 | 22,084 | 19% |

* Figures were derived from Annual Reports on the State of the Missions for the years cited, SBMA.

The percentage of corn in the total harvest was exactly half in 1821 of what it had been in 1785. There was, however, a rise in the percentage of corn after 1810 which apparently was a response to supplying the needs of traders, military and civilians following the end of government salaries and support after 1810. Documentation suggests that when foodstuffs were requisitioned by the military the missions most often responded by supplying maize. This was to their advantage since with extensive irrigation systems corn was easily cultivated and the missionaries preferred to keep the wheat for their own consumption.

Irrigation which was a response to drought was responsible for the startling increase in corn yields after 1810 which are illustrated in Table 17. Most missions, including San Diego, had extensive irrigation systems

in the last decade of Spanish control, which enabled maize to be grown more extensively and with better results as the figures indicate.

Corn production was adjusted according to demand and the Fathers did not attempt to indiscriminately increase harvests. Table 17 illustrates that in a number of years, corn plantings were reduced. Corn plantings were also a function of harvests of other grains, principally wheat. If wheat did poorly it was natural that in the following year not only increased quantities of wheat would be sown, but also, as added insurance, increased quantities of corn.

Barley, the third staple, was used as feed for both humans and livestock. The variety was Coast Barley (*Hordeum vulgare pallidum typica*) which corresponds to present day North African and Spanish varieties and was an obvious direct import from the Old World.⁵⁶¹ It was well equipped to withstand drought and, hence was often sown as insurance against failure of wheat and maize due to inadequate moisture. Missions prone to prolonged dry spells often excelled in its cultivation. Mission San Diego, for example, outstripped many more richly endowed missions. Frequently fertile missions such as San Juan Capistrano, San Gabriel, San Fernando and Purísima cultivated no barley since harvests of wheat and maize rarely failed to the extent that food supplies ran short.

TABLE 19

PERCENTAGE OF BARLEY IN MISSION HARVESTS OF
STAPLE CROPS 1785-1821*

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Total Harvest in Fanegas</i> | <i>Barley Harvest in Fanegas</i> | <i>Percentage of Barley</i> |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1785 | 9,052 | 883 | 9% |
| 1790 | 18,460 | 2,876 | 15% |
| 1795 | 18,056 | 894 | 4% |
| 1800 | 41,309 | 2,795 | 6% |
| 1805 | 59,734 | 7,869 | 13% |
| 1810 | 61,864 | 10,091 | 16% |
| 1815 | 61,558 | 7,622 | 12% |
| 1820 | 62,365 | 4,268 | 6% |
| 1821 | 115,965 | 14,141 | 12% |

* These figures were derived from Annual Reports on the Missions for the years cited, SBMA.

With the exception of one of the years listed, barley was outstripped by maize as a percentage of the total crop. Yields of barley (Table 19) remained relatively stable throughout the period exhibiting no discernible

⁵⁶¹ George W. Hendry, "The Adobe Brick as an Historical Source," *JAH*, Vol. 5, 1931, 111-113.

tendency to increase or decrease. Barley sowing also had a distinct relationship to wheat harvests tending to increase following poor harvests of wheat.

Drought was not the only threat to agriculture, although it was the most serious. Heavy rains which inundated pastures and fields could ruin livestock and harvests. Fray Manuel Fernández wrote to Governor Borica from Mission Santa Cruz in 1798 that:

Cattle have died during the past year because of the heavy rains which inundated the fields so that there was no pasture. The cattle are weak and have grown steadily worse since June. Many cattle went into the recesses of the mountains.⁵⁶²

Again in 1816 and 1817 heavy rains had devastating effects on some crops.

Ground squirrels, gophers and rats multiplied rapidly as Indians were attracted to missions and no longer hunted them for food. Rodents in fields or storehouses decimated food supplies. Thick mustard stands sometimes choked crops and hid livestock so they could not be found. Fray Luis Jayme wrote Governor Solá from Soledad in late summer of 1816, explaining that it had been necessary to begin "burning thick mustard grass in which cattle hide and cannot be retrieved."⁵⁶³ Locusts and birds also frequently wreaked havoc with harvests. In 1810 Father José Señán complained that birds had been feeding on crops and serious damage had resulted. Missions usually kept poisons containing strychnine for such pests, but Señán had run short of those which he considered most effective.⁵⁶⁴ Modern farmers appreciate the damage which a horde of locusts can do to crops and they would have had the deep sympathy of California's missionaries. After a particularly hard year in 1815, Father Señán expressed his gratitude in 1816 that "God has not sent the pestilence of locusts which destroy them (crops)."⁵⁶⁵ In 1815 acting Governor José Argüello wrote from Santa Barbara that crops were good because they had not been plagued, as in former years, with locusts which together with grasshoppers constituted a serious problem.⁵⁶⁶ The insects were so numerous at Mission Soledad in 1822 that Father Mariano Payeras complained:

⁵⁶² Father Manuel Fernández to Governor Borica, Santa Cruz, September 19, 1798, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

⁵⁶³ Father Luis Jayme to Governor Borica, Soledad, August 22, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

⁵⁶⁴ Father José Señán to Father José Guilez, San Buenaventura, April 5, 1810, DML. Señán mentions *cavalonga*, *yerba de Puebla* and *nux vomica*, all of which contain strychnine. See Maximo Martínez, *Catálogo de Nombres vulgares y científicos de Plantas Mexicanas*, Mexico, 1937.

⁵⁶⁵ Father José Señán to Governor Solá, San Buenaventura, April 9, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

⁵⁶⁶ Noticia de las Misiones, José Dario Argüello, Santa Barbara Presidio, May 1815, SBMA. On the death of Governor Arrillaga in July, 1814, Argüello was the ranking officer and hence acting governor. As such, it was his duty to render a report on the missions similar to the biennial report of the Father President of the missions.

This year has been most short of water and at present we have a most abundant plague of grasshoppers, or locusts, and as a result there will be little pasture, little grain and little tallow.⁵⁶⁷

Although the effects of rodents and insects on crops was at times serious, its overall effect is impossible to measure.

Despite droughts which afflicted mission agriculture in 1795, 1809, 1817 and again in 1820, and various natural pests, including rodents, insects and birds, the California missions survived and prospered. In the early days of California such calamities would have caused extreme suffering and neophytes would have been released to fend for themselves. After 1790 California's missions had developed means of protecting themselves from crop failure. The increase in the number of missions decreased the chance that all would simultaneously suffer food shortages. The general productivity of missions such as San Juan Capistrano and San Gabriel insured that surpluses would be available to aid missions with shortages. Systems of irrigation also proved to be hedges against drought. After San Diego experienced droughts in 1801 and 1803 work was begun on an extensive system of irrigation. This included a dam with an aqueduct which carried water to the mission and fields. This aqueduct illustrated construction techniques utilized at most missions and consisted of tiles resting on cobblestones in cement and was approximately one foot deep and two feet wide.⁵⁶⁸ The third expedient which could be relied upon in lean years was the storage of surpluses from years of plenty. All missions established granaries in which were stored current harvests and surpluses. In 1806 Langsdorf observed that Mission San José had granaries which held 2,000 fanegas of wheat and a proportionate quantity of maize, barley, peas, beans and other grain. At Mission San Francisco he noted magazines for storing tallow, soap and ox hides in addition to facilities for the storage of corn, peas and beans.⁵⁶⁹ Surpluses not needed by one mission were often transferred to another sometimes on a barter basis but if it was a serious need gifts were made. To facilitate delivery, surpluses were often stored near where they might be needed rather than at the mission which produced them. Mission La Purísima supplied cattle to San Antonio, received wheat from La Soledad, and fruit from San Fernando while wheat was given to San Luis Obispo. Wheat and leather goods were also given to San Juan Bautista. Purísima stored wheat and other grains at San Luis Obispo. The grain was thus in a position to aid either San Luis Obispo or San Miguel which on one occasion was given one hundred

⁵⁶⁷ Father Mariano Payeras to Father Guardian José Gasol, Mission La Soledad, June 26, 1822, AGN. Historia de Mexico, Vol. I.

⁵⁶⁸ Engelhardt, *Mission San Diego*, 154.

⁵⁶⁹ Langsdorf, *Voyages*, 161, 193.

fanegas of grain, two of peas, four of kidney beans, twenty-five of summer wheat and the rest corn. San Gabriel often performed a similar function in the south together with San Juan Capistrano.⁵⁷⁰ In 1783 Mission San Diego had to draw upon surpluses from San Gabriel and San Juan Capistrano. The two missions donated corn, beans and wine.⁵⁷¹

The only crop planted with any regularity besides wheat, maize and barley, was the kidney bean which was sown universally with a wide variety of results. In certain instances less was harvested than had been sown while in the same year at other missions it might yield as much as seventy-four fanegas for each one sown. At many missions, however, it did form a significant portion of the diet and was especially important because of high nutritive value and the protein which it added. The small harvests distort its significance as a food crop.

A few other vegetable crops supplemented the diet at some of the missions. These included chickpeas, lentils, peas and beans which were by no means universally grown. Experimental crops were attempted, but in the cases of sugar and cotton, results were disappointing. The cultivation of these two crops was a reaction to the end of regular shipments from San Blas. In 1819 and 1820 Mission San Diego made attempts at cotton culture. In 1819 results were poor and no real harvest was made, but in 1820 Father José Sánchez reported to Governor Solá that fourteen arrobas of cotton, including seed, had been harvested.⁵⁷² Mission San Fernando was the site of one of the early attempts to grow sugar. Father Pedro Muñoz informed Solá that, "We are growing sugar and they have made some *panocha* but it isn't as good as that which comes from San Blas and other places. The winters here are too cold and water is too scarce."⁵⁷³

At times the founding of new missions put an almost unbearable strain on resources of existing ones. 1797 was the banner year for the beginning of new missions. In that year five were established and supplies were stretched almost to the point of real shortages despite good harvests.⁵⁷⁴ The challenge was met in two ways. Older establishments, anticipating the need to provision the new, attempted to produce surpluses in the immedi-

⁵⁷⁰ Account Book of Mission Purísima 1806-1834. Transcribed by Lewis Thomas and Elvira Osuna, 203-208, SBMA.

⁵⁷¹ Status of San Diego Mission at the end of December, 1784. Fray Fermín Francisco de Lasuén, AGN., Hacienda Series, Mis. Alta California, Informes. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, II, 368-371.

⁵⁷² Father José Sánchez to Governor Solá, San Diego, January 22, 1820, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

⁵⁷³ Father Pedro Muñoz to Governor Solá, San Fernando, April 29, 1817, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

⁵⁷⁴ In 1797 San José, San Juan Bautista, San Miguel, San Fernando and San Luis Rey were founded.

TABLE 20

PERCENTAGE OF KIDNEY BEANS IN TOTAL
MISSION HARVESTS 1785-1821*

| Year | Total Harvest in Fanegas | Kidney Bean Harvest in Fanegas | Percentage of Kidney Beans |
|------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1785 | 9,624 | 476 | 4% |
| 1790 | 19,524 | 783 | 4% |
| 1795 | 19,305 | 986 | 5% |
| 1800 | 43,988 | 1,312 | 2% |
| 1805 | 63,805 | 1,304 | 2% |
| 1810 | 65,906 | 1,344 | 2% |
| 1815 | 65,667 | 1,377 | 2% |
| 1820 | 67,452 | 2,127 | 3% |
| 1821 | 123,119 | 4,850 | 3% |

* These figures were derived from Annual Reports on the Missions for the years cited, SBMA. Figures for total harvests vary from those in Tables 17, 18, 19 since they include totals for only the three major staples, whereas the figures here include all crops harvested.

ately preceeding years. The second, and least desirable solution was to curtail consumption so as to provide a surplus. This could be done either by limiting rations or by sending Indians away from missions. The second alternative was avoided since it defeated the purpose for which missions had been established. It is probable that 1797, a year in which staple crop production reached a new peak, was nevertheless a year of hardship and shortages.

Livestock herds were also decimated to supply new missions. When San José was founded in 1797, San Carlos, Santa Clara and San Francisco donated 12 mules, 42 horses, 232 lambs, 38 rams, 60 cows, 2 bulls, 8 heifers and 8 yoke of oxen. All three missions sent neophyte laborers, farm implements, agricultural tools and domestic utensils. Each sent pack mules loaded with grain and other foodstuffs and were expected to continue doing so until the mission was self-supporting.⁵⁷⁵ In the same year Santa Barbara, San Gabriel and San Buenaventura donated a variety of livestock and foodstuffs to Mission San Fernando.⁵⁷⁶ In the general levy to obtain supplies, certain missions were exempt because of inability to contribute without endangering their own existence. Santa Cruz, for example, was exempted because her church and buildings had been damaged during the winter and large grain losses had been sustained.

⁵⁷⁵ Lasuén to Fray Pedro Callejas, San Carlos, June 30, 1797, AGN. DHM, ser. 1, Vol. I. Trans. in Kenneally, *Writings of Lasuén*, II, 35.

⁵⁷⁶ Lasuén to Fray Pedro Callejas, San Fernando, September 8, 1797, AGN. DHM, ser. 1, Vol. I. *Ibid.*, II, 45.

Santa Cruz had only been established in 1791 and further depletion of resources could not be afforded.⁵⁷⁷

Livestock was integral to the mission economy in numerous ways. Cattle were an alternative food source in case of drought. In 1807 Father Mariano Payeras at Mission Purísima purchased cattle from other missions in order to fill the deficit caused by lack of grain.⁵⁷⁸ At other times great feasts of beef were prepared, particularly if the mission had an illustrious visitor. As a result of observations made on his voyage to California in 1792, George Vancouver gave a colorful account of beef raising and eating at Mission Santa Clara where a feast was prepared in his honor. Black cattle propagated rapidly and lived in large herds in a semi-wild state on the vast plains surrounding Santa Clara. Preparations for the dinner began when soldiers were sent out to take cattle. Two men lassoed a steer from opposite directions using a leather line with a long running noose. The lines were then wrapped around the saddle pommels, while a third person brought the animal down and slit its throat. Twenty-two steers, 400-600 pounds each were slaughtered, of which eighteen were given to the neophytes. Vancouver was told that twenty-four were slaughtered each Saturday, however, he noted that the Fathers had wisely forbidden the slaughter of any cattle until they had increased sufficiently. Sheep and horses, the Englishmen observed, had increased almost as rapidly due to the same careful management.⁵⁷⁹

It was not as a source of food, however, that cattle were most often used. As work animals, oxen plowed the fields and threshed harvested grain. As providers of hides and tallow, they gave missions raw materials for soap, candles and leather goods of all types in addition to exportable commodities whose real value became obvious after 1810.

Sheep were also a primary component of mission livestock and in numbers exceeded cattle. They were the most important meat source and chunks of mutton were routinely added to the various gruels prepared for the sustenance of Indian neophytes. As the source of wool, sheep made mission clothing industries possible. Sheep skin was frequently used for the manufacture of various articles of clothing and skins were often sold by missions to the military. In 1816 Fray Juan Bautista Sancho sent Governor Solá seventy-one sheepskins from San Antonio with which to clothe his needy soldiers.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷⁷ Lasuén to Don Diego de Borica, San Carlos, May 5, 1797, AGN. DHM, ser. 1, Vol. I. Trans. in *Ibid.*, II, 28.

⁵⁷⁸ Father Mariano Payeras to Father José Viñals, Santa Barbara, October 13, 1807, AGN. Historia de Mexico. Primera Serie. Tomo 2.

⁵⁷⁹ Wilbur, *Vancouver in California*, 44.

⁵⁸⁰ Father Juan Bautista Sancho to Governor Solá, San Antonio, September 2, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

Goats and swine were never as important as cattle and sheep in the mission economy. Goats were a source of milk and occasionally of meat. In 1818 Fray Juan Amoros at Mission San Carlos made a special gift to Governor Solá of a "tender young goat" presumably to grace the Governor's table.⁵⁸¹ Limited amounts of pork were eaten fresh or salted, smoked and preserved as ham or chorizo. A good ham was a gift which many Fathers considered worthy of the Governor. Some missions raised no pigs however, and some of those which did eliminated them before the end of the period. In 1818 Father Estevan Tapis sent his remaining hogs to Monterey saying he had decided to discontinue raising them.⁵⁸²

Horses and mules were important as work animals and were the only speedy alternatives to the creeping, rumbling ox drawn carts. Both were used for field work along with oxen. Mules, in particular, were widely used to staff the supply service which moved goods between missions, presidios and to and from vessels along the coast. The animals were essential for movement of people and mail, sometimes all the way down the peninsula to Loreto.

Small livestock, consisting mainly of turkeys and chickens, were never enumerated in reports, but were present in considerable numbers. Chickens were included in most early shipments. Turkeys, hitherto thought to be a later introduction, were present in early years. A shipment consigned to Father Serra in 1771 included fifty chickens, ten roosters and six turkeys.⁵⁸³ The chickens multiplied rapidly and were valuable both for meat and eggs, but turkeys were never so plentiful. In 1816 Fray Pedro Muñoz wrote to José de la Guerra from Mission San Fernando answering a request from the Captain for some turkeys. Father Muñoz regretfully replied that he might be able to supply some later, but that at the present time the mission had only two toms and was saving the hens because some were breeding while others were hatching.⁵⁸⁴

Droughts affected the huge mission livestock herds by destroying pasture and causing starvation. Heavy rains had the same effect. Mission Santa Cruz, for example, had constant livestock problems due to drought. In 1798 Father Manuel Fernández wrote Governor Borica that many animals were dying; cattle, cows, horses, particularly stallions and up to half of the sheep because of a lack of food due to the scarcity of pasture. All of the cows and half of the mares had been put to pasture near Branciforte.⁵⁸⁵ Usually years in which food crops were affected by diseases, pests

⁵⁸¹ Father Juan Amoros to Governor Solá, San Carlos, May 1, 1818, AASF, Phs. SBMA.

⁵⁸² Father Estevan Tapis to Governor Solá, San Juan Bautista, November 5, 1818, AASF, Phs. SBMA.

⁵⁸³ Memorial of Goods remitted to California, 1770-1771, SBMA.

⁵⁸⁴ Pedro Muñoz to José de la Guerra, San Fernando, May 9, 1816, DGC, SBMA.

TABLE 21

MISSION HERDS OF MAJOR LIVESTOCK*

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Cattle</i> | <i>Percent Increase</i> | <i>Horses</i> | <i>Percent Increase</i> | <i>Mules</i> | <i>Increase</i> |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1785 | 6,813 | 26 | 1,034 | 9 | 204 | 5 |
| 1786 | 8,266 | 21 | 1,104 | 6 | 198 | -3 |
| 1787 | 9,846 | 19 | 1,369 | 24 | 220 | 11 |
| 1788 | 11,747 | 19 | 1,710 | 24 | 220 | 0 |
| 1790 | 19,398 | 65 | 2,678 | 56 | 219 | 0 |
| 1791 | 25,180 | 29 | 3,162 | 18 | 258 | 17 |
| 1792 | 30,045 | 19 | 3,976 | 25 | 289 | 12 |
| 1793 | 31,070 | 3 | 4,782 | 20 | 337 | 16 |
| 1794 | 32,117 | 3 | 5,529 | 15 | 353 | 4 |
| 1795 | 31,167 | -3 | 6,084 | 10 | 432 | 22 |
| 1796 | 32,460 | 4 | 7,280 | 19 | 378 | -13 |
| 1797 | 34,674 | 6 | 8,125 | 11 | 475 | 25 |
| 1798 | 39,912 | 15 | 9,311 | 14 | 559 | 17 |
| 1799 | 45,739 | 14 | 10,811 | 16 | 694 | 24 |
| 1800 | 54,321 | 18 | 12,212 | 12 | 742 | 6 |
| 1801 | 57,973 | 6 | 13,008 | 6 | 800 | 7 |
| 1802 | 67,782 | 16 | 19,429 | 49 | 877 | 9 |
| 1803 | 77,578 | 14 | 15,741 | -19 | 867 | -2 |
| 1804 | 84,198 | 8 | 19,468 | 23 | 976 | 12 |
| 1805 | 95,035 | 12 | 21,983 | 12 | 1,099 | 12 |
| 1806 | 98,999 | 4 | 22,672 | 3 | 1,181 | 7 |
| 1807 | 106,181 | 7 | 19,169 | -16 | 1,350 | 14 |
| 1808 | 116,422 | 9 | 19,456 | 1 | 1,340 | -1 |
| 1809 | 120,435 | 3 | 17,069 | -13 | 1,394 | 4 |
| 1810 | 116,306 | -4 | 16,782 | -1 | 1,561 | 11 |
| 1811 | 123,288 | 6 | 17,345 | 3 | 1,675 | 7 |
| 1812 | 124,769 | 1 | 18,068 | 4 | 1,850 | 10 |
| 1813 | 134,827 | 8 | 16,965 | -7 | 2,020 | 9 |
| 1814 | 137,976 | 2 | 16,971 | 0 | 1,878 | -8 |
| 1815 | 139,596 | 1 | 16,190 | -1 | 1,921 | 2 |
| 1816 | 142,607 | 1 | 18,929 | 16 | 1,918 | 0 |
| 1817 | 130,298 | -9 | 16,496 | -13 | 1,904 | -1 |
| 1818 | 144,427 | 10 | 17,508 | 6 | 1,843 | -4 |
| 1819 | 141,321 | -3 | 18,474 | 5 | 2,054 | 11 |
| 1820 | 149,489 | 5 | 17,856 | -4 | 1,882 | 9 |
| 1821 | 149,730 | 0 | 19,830 | 11 | 2,011 | 6 |

* Figures were derived from Annual Reports on the Missions for the years cited, SBMA. The Report for 1784 had to be used to derive figures for 1785 and no report is extant for 1789.

⁵⁸⁵ Father Manuel Fernández to Governor Borica, Santa Cruz, January 27, 1798, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

or poor weather were also hard years for livestock. As mission herds expanded rapidly after 1790, pasture needs kept pace often causing conflict with private ranchos, pueblos and royal ranchos. Pueblo San José, which had been established too close to Mission Santa Clara originally, was constantly under attack for allowing livestock to encroach on pastures which the mission claimed.⁵⁸⁶ Rancho Buri-Buri, a government stock ranch near San Francisco, was accused in 1804 of allowing herds to encroach on mission land. Examples of such conflicts are numerous.⁵⁸⁷

Tables 21 and 22 illustrate the prodigious increase in mission herds between 1785 and 1821. The increase in cattle and horses was so enormous that wild animals became a nuisance after 1800 and plans were made to relieve the problem. In March of 1805 Father President Tapis wrote to Governor Arrillaga suggesting a slaughter of horses to prevent too rapid an increase.⁵⁸⁸ Horses and cattle were slaughtered, although how many is not apparent. Langsdorf noted in 1806 that:

The cattle, horses, and sheep do not require any particular care and attention. The herds are left out in the open field the whole year through and only a sufficient number are kept in the neighbourhood of the establishments to serve their immediate wants. When a supply of cattle is wanted, some of the converts and soldiers are sent out into the fields on horseback, and with slings, which they throw very dexterously, they catch by the horns the number required.

The immense herds of cattle now to be seen in these parts spring from five head which were brought hither for the missions in the year 1776. The Governor of Monterey, with whom we became acquainted during our stay, assured me that the number had been so great during latter years in the missions of St. Francisco, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz, that some months before he had been under the necessity of sending out a party of soldiers, who had killed no less than twenty thousand, as he began to be afraid that from the immense increase of them, there might in a short time have been a want of sufficient pasture for their support.⁵⁸⁹

The abundance of cattle, sheep and livestock after 1800, but particularly after 1810 is reflected in Tables 21 and 22. Increases in absolute numbers were large but the rate of increase had declined substantially from early years, thus reflecting the over-abundant supply of livestock and dwindling pasture reserves. It is also probable that livestock figures reported by missions after 1800 were estimates and no head count was taken. Between 1785 and 1795 cattle herds increased 371 percent, sheep 497 percent and horses 488 percent, while between 1810 and 1820 cattle increased 28 percent, sheep 22 percent and horses only 6 percent.

The prodigious agricultural and pastoral production of the Alta California missions had little to do with technology but rather was attributable

⁵⁸⁶ José Mariano Castro to Governor Arrillaga, Pueblo San José, December 31, 1804, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

⁵⁸⁷ Father Martín de Landaeta to Governor Arrillaga, San Francisco, December 31, 1806, AASF. Phs. SBMA.

⁵⁸⁸ Father Estevan Tapis to Governor Arrillaga, Santa Barbara, March 1, 1805, SBMA.

⁵⁸⁹ Langsdorf, *Voyages*, II, 169-170.

TABLE 22

MISSION HERDS OF MINOR LIVESTOCK*

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Sheep</i> | <i>Percent Increase</i> | <i>Goats</i> | <i>Percent Increase</i> | <i>Pigs</i> | <i>Increase</i> |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1785 | 6,813 | 17 | 3,858 | -10 | 336 | 8 |
| 1786 | 9,763 | 43 | 3,710 | -4 | 329 | -3 |
| 1787 | 11,004 | 12 | 3,919 | 5 | 502 | 52 |
| 1788 | 12,757 | 15 | 3,651 | -7 | 512 | 1 |
| 1790 | 21,415 | 67 | 3,930 | 7 | 519 | 1 |
| 1791 | 26,286 | 22 | 4,040 | 2 | 392 | -25 |
| 1792 | 31,906 | 21 | 2,560 | -37 | 351 | -11 |
| 1793 | 38,477 | 20 | 1,854 | -38 | 363 | 3 |
| 1794 | 38,195 | -1 | 1,506 | -19 | 356 | -2 |
| 1795 | 40,690 | 6 | 1,429 | -6 | 236 | -34 |
| 1796 | 48,554 | 19 | 1,026 | -29 | 232 | -2 |
| 1797 | 59,815 | 23 | 370 | -64 | 325 | 40 |
| 1798 | 67,315 | 12 | 190 | -49 | 158 | -52 |
| 1799 | 76,130 | 13 | 292 | 53 | 420 | 165 |
| 1800 | 85,060 | 11 | 122 | -59 | 323 | -24 |
| 1801 | 92,118 | 8 | 181 | 48 | 668 | 106 |
| 1802 | 107,172 | 16 | 212 | 17 | 1,040 | 55 |
| 1803 | 117,362 | 9 | 220 | 3 | 1,010 | -3 |
| 1804 | 129,375 | 10 | 160 | 28 | 737 | -28 |
| 1805 | 136,953 | 5 | 120 | 25 | 800 | 8 |
| 1806 | 143,438 | 4 | 220 | 83 | 762 | -5 |
| 1807 | 157,466 | 9 | 246 | 11 | 748 | -2 |
| 1808 | 171,165 | 8 | 188 | 24 | 883 | 18 |
| 1809 | 166,128 | -3 | 409 | 117 | 861 | -3 |
| 1810 | 157,014 | -6 | 372 | -10 | 1,010 | 17 |
| 1811 | 162,772 | 3 | 524 | 40 | 1,068 | 5 |
| 1812 | 147,244 | -10 | 620 | 18 | 1,433 | 34 |
| 1813 | 171,090 | 16 | 721 | 16 | 1,445 | 1 |
| 1814 | 175,537 | 2 | 1,089 | 51 | 1,654 | 14 |
| 1815 | 183,829 | 4 | 1,312 | 20 | 1,670 | 1 |
| 1816 | 184,703 | 5 | 1,236 | -6 | 1,737 | 4 |
| 1817 | 173,995 | -6 | 1,431 | 15 | 1,720 | -1 |
| 1818 | 186,051 | 7 | 1,569 | 9 | 2,049 | 19 |
| 1819 | 185,883 | -1 | 1,562 | -1 | 1,920 | -7 |
| 1820 | 191,693 | 3 | 1,711 | 9 | 1,811 | -6 |
| 1821 | 193,234 | 1 | 1,469 | -15 | 1,633 | -10 |

* Figures were derived from Annual Reports on the Missions for the years cited, SBMA. The report for 1784 had to be used to derive figures for 1785 and no report is extant for 1789.

to fertile and abundant land, good climate and a labor intensive system. Only in the area of irrigation did technology play a part in enhancing production. Land was an expendable resource. Few attempts were made to conserve fertility when pastures and fields could simply expand into virgin areas, thus increasing declining yields. Because of a plentiful labor

supply, herds and acreage under cultivation could be expanded practically without limit.

Harvests were never augmented in the long run by increasing yield per quantity of seed sown. No evidence exists of attempts to improve soil quality or to improve seed stock. The same grain varieties continued to be prevalent throughout the period. Agricultural techniques developed in Spain through the centuries and practiced in New Spain were simply transferred to California. Traditional culture was not disposed to accept innovation in place of time-tested procedures. Farming implements were primitive and represented slight advance over those given through Rome to ancient Iberians. Plows were made of two pieces of timber, one of which was formed of a crooked branch which constituted the plow and handle. A second beam ran from the handle to yoke where it was fastened with leather to the horns of oxen. The only iron in the apparatus was attached to the point of the plow. The depth of the furrow was adjusted by raising and lowering the beam where it connected with the yoke. Drawbacks to the system were apparent since deep plowing was impossible, and only a rut could be made, thus necessitating crossing and recrossing the field many times. Sowing was done by hand and seed was covered using a bushy branch, dragging a log or, as in the case of corn, with the foot.

Reaping was done with knives and sickles after which grain was stacked and removed to the mission proper for threshing. Here it was spread on a floor and horses and oxen were sent in to trample it. Chaff was afterwards removed by winnowing with forks and shovels.

Threshed grain was stored and ground to flour as needed by Indian women using a mortar and pestle. Refusal in most instances to adopt animal or water powered mills is indicative of a reluctance to change and of the Indian labor supply, which made it cheaper to employ Indians at such tasks than to build a mill. La Pérouse appreciated the amount of labor wasted in grinding and presented a small mill to Mission San Carlos in 1786, commenting that now four women could do the work of a hundred.⁵⁹⁰ In 1806 Langsdorf commented upon the problem:

The excellent and friendly La Pérouse, with a view to lessening the labor, left a hand mill here, but it was no longer in existence, nor had any use been made of it as a model from which to manufacture windmills. When we consider that there is no country in the world where windmills are more numerous than in Spain, it seems incomprehensible why these very useful machines have never been introduced here; I learn't however, that in preferring the very indifferent meal produced by the mode of grinding above mentioned, the good fathers are actuated by political motives. As they have more men and women under their care than they could keep constantly employed the whole year, if labor were too much facilitated, they are afraid of making them idle by the introduction of mills.⁵⁹¹

Langsdorf was astute. There was no incentive for technological innovation

⁵⁹⁰ La Pérouse, *Voyage Round the World*, I, 450.

⁵⁹¹ Langsdorf, *Voyages*, II, 169.

when thousands of neophyte Indians would labor for room and board. This is not to say that no mills operated at the missions. In 1796 a mill was constructed at Mission Santa Cruz, although rain damage probably prevented its use.⁵⁹² By 1816 two mule powered mills were in operation at San Francisco and one at San Luis Obispo. Generally, however, milling continued to be done by neophyte women.⁵⁹³

Agricultural and livestock industries at the mission retained a primitive and technologically backward character, as did all mission activities, because incentive for change was not present. Climate, soil and adequate labor conjoined to produce more than could be consumed in California with a bountiful surplus left over for trade. Missions were not operated to maximize profit, but to save souls. With a limited market, cheap labor and regulated prices, there was no need to attempt to reduce costs through technological innovation.

CONCLUSION

Spanish California provides a unique opportunity to scrutinize in microcosm the Spanish Conquest of the New World. In a compressed time framework of sixty-one years Hispanic California experienced many of the stages of conquest which evolved in the course of centuries throughout much of Spanish America. In relatively few years California passed from a struggling frontier bastion to virtual economic independence by 1810 and independence from the Spanish Empire in 1821. While political independence was peripheral and was not influenced by domestic events, economic independence was in large part made possible by the missions.

The missions of Alta California closely approximated the ideal of "the mission as a frontier institution" with the successes and unforeseen failures. In their primary and implied functions the missions succeeded remarkably. Christianization and Hispanicization were eminently successful. Indians were gathered and were taught rudiments of Christianity together with those skills regarded as necessary for survival in Hispanic society. With Indian labor the missions easily provided basic necessities for the communities which were gathered. Thus these missions had reached the goals and fulfilled the roles for which they had been ordained. Beyond that they shouldered burdens which had never been intended for them. Their ability to totally support the military and much of the civilian establishment attests to economic success and was far beyond normal expectations.

The California missions have often been accused of evading govern-

⁵⁹² Bancroft, *Voyages*, II, 169.

⁵⁹³ Father Luis Antonio Martínez to Governor Solá, San Luis Obispo, September 4, 1816, AASF. Phs. SBMA. Mahr, *Visit of the Rurik*, 95.

ment orders and of malevolently depriving the military of needed sustenance. To be sure, the situation of the military has to be appreciated. They must have felt abandoned and forgotten by the authorities they were presumably serving. The missions, however, were attempting to protect their functions as guardians of Indians. Supplying the military was not their obligation while seeing to the needs of the neophyte community was not only their duty but also the basis upon which they were certain they would be judged in the hereafter. Consequently missionaries were reluctant to deprive Indians in favor of the military. Nevertheless there is no evidence that anyone, Indian or Hispanic, ever starved because of refusal by the missions to provide basic necessities. It was practically incomprehensible to the military that missionaries should attach equal importance to the survival of Indians and *gente de razon*. Such conflict was endemic in the Spanish colonial system and its repetition throughout the empire was widespread. It was expected that institutions would conflict on the local level in the process of protecting their roles and functions. Spheres of authority were deliberately poorly defined to allow for change and adaptation to local situations. Ultimately, resulting conflicts would be settled with reference to local circumstances upon appeal to higher authority which could command the obedience of both parties to the dispute. After 1810 however both Spain and New Spain went through sporadic chaos and revolution which drew attention further away from the problems and needs of a distant and relatively insignificant province such as California. Conflict consequently had to be worked out domestically with no arbitration from above. It is in no way surprising that conflict developed but it is testimony to the basic goodwill of both military and mission that in most instances it was amicably settled.

The California missions were economic successes but in the process tended to destroy the Indians they had been sent to save. This destruction was inexcusable but it was not intentional. The missionaries would have preferred to have dead Christians rather than live pagans. It is not fair however to remove these men from their time context and judge them by twentieth century standards. Their aim was to produce good Christians and loyal subjects of the King. As occurred throughout the Americas, debilitating European diseases and a lack of sensitivity to the lifestyle of the Indians destroyed the first Americans. The regimentation, organized labor and extreme paternalism of the missions resulted in despondency and disappearance of the desire to live. The Indian was the sole reason for the existence of missions and also was the factor which provided the economic basis for the missions and enabled the survival of Hispanic California after 1810. Declining Indian population was one of the prime reasons for the gradual decline of the missions in the Mexican period.

The mission period in Alta California to 1821 saw the institution approach the ideal while at the same time those forces which ultimately would destroy the system were gathering impetus. From the outside, liberal forces were gaining in Spain and in Mexico and eventually would judge the mission system to be incompatible with liberal ideals of equality, liberty and justice. Liberalism eventually destroyed the missions and allowed despoliation of mission properties and of the Indians which they sustained.

The Franciscan Fathers of California unwittingly participated in the destruction of the very system to which they were so devoted. The mission as an institution was a part of the "Old Regime" and its life depended upon the absolutism and paternalism of the Spanish Monarchy. Mercantilist economic restrictions against which missionaries chafed were an integral part of this scheme. The free trade which missionaries espoused in their dealings with foreigners was a part of the new liberalism given impetus by the wave of idealism following the success of the French and American Revolutions. Free trade gradually lessened and finally broke economic ties with Mexico. Economic interests attracted foreigners and eventually determined that California would be tied economically, and finally politically, to the United States.

An economic analysis of the California missions would have left the Franciscan frontiersmen cold. Profit, after all, would have been calculated in souls saved, not in fanegas reaped, number of livestock, manufactures or cash on hand. The profit incentive was never the prime motivation of the Franciscan missionaries. Economic success was incidental, however essential, for achievement of missionary goals. Unlike the English colonies, the Spanish colonization of California was not prompted by economic motives but by a combination of religious zeal and defensive strategy. Given the peripheral interest of Crown and missionary in solvency the economic achievements of the California missions are all the more remarkable.

The eventual despoliation of the California Indian points to an apparent failure of the missions. However, the missions were unqualified successes in providing the basis for the agricultural industry for which California has subsequently become justly famous. Both in agriculture and in livestock raising the missions provided the foundations for future prosperity.

Immense mission livestock herds provided the seed stock for private ranchos which had their beginnings in the Spanish period and which experienced continued growth in the Mexican and American periods. Many mission ranchos continued to prosper under private ownership after the secularization of the missions in the 1830's.

Mission agriculture served as a grand experiment in which climatic

conditions were ascertained, the best lands were put under cultivation and suitable crops were imported and acclimated to California conditions. California's vineyards, farms, orchards and ranches owe much to the intrepid Franciscans who became agricultural and pastoral experts out of necessity rather than choice.

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